southern voice

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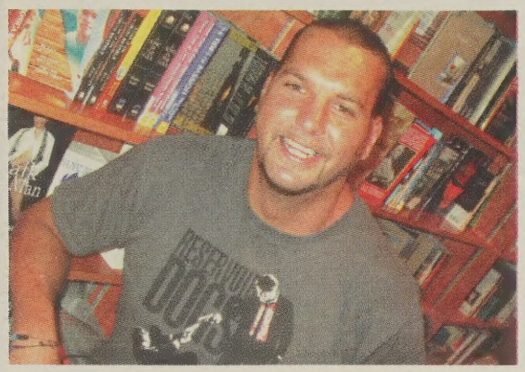
Working it out
Jackie Warner's fitness show helps make Bravo the 'gay network' of choice.
Page 25



Former professional wrestler **Chris 'Kanyon' Klucsarits** says he's happier than he's ever been now that he is living in Midtown Atlanta. (Photo by Bo Shell)

Ready to rumble ... again

Chris 'Kanyon' Klucsarits comes out after years in WWE pro wrestling ring

By BO SHELL

The name Chris Klucsarits probably doesn't ring a bell with most gay men and lesbians, and only professional wrestling fans would recognize his stage names "Mortis" and "Chris Kanyon."

But Klucsarits hopes his career will soon bridge the gay and wrestling worlds. For 14 years, he was a six-figure mid- to high-card wrestler for World Championship Wrestling, World Wrestling Entertainment (formerly the World Wrestling Federation) and Total Nonstop Action.

Now Klucsarits is struggling for a re-birth in the super-straight world of pro wrestling after bouts of depression, two serious injuries, two suicide attempts and coming out as gay.

"I don't think I could have ever achieved this level of happiness, desire, focu, or motivation without coming clean about who I was, without coming out," Klucsarits says. "I felt like I lied for 35 years, and it caused so much pain and turmoil I wondered if those who

Please see **WRESTLER** on **Page 35**

Gay state rep re-elected

State Rep. **Karla Drenner** (D-Avondale Estates) toasted her reelection victory July 18. (Photo by Dyana Bagby)

Allen Thornell (right) celebrated on Election Night with **Glen Paul Freedman**, his campaign chair. (Photo by Bo Shell)

Former Georgia Equality leader makes runoff for House seat

By DYANA BAGBY and ZACK HUDSON

Popping open a bottle of champagne shortly after midnight, finally confident with her reelection, state Rep. Karla Drenner emotionally thanked the 30 supporters who stayed late at her Avondale Estates home awaiting final results of the July 18 primary.

"I could not have done this without you," she said tearfully. "We spoke truth to power tonight."

At press time, unofficial results from the Secretary of State's Office showed Drenner leading opponent Cynthia Tucker in the Democratic primary 1,678 votes (or 62.4 percent) to 1,009 votes (or 37.6 percent). With no Republican in the general election, Drenner is the winner of the seat.

The other openly gay candidate backed by gay rights groups on Tuesday's ballot, former Georgia Equality head Allen Thornell, was expected to be in the Democratic runoff Aug. 8 against attorney Robbin Shipp.

With 87 percent of precincts reporting at press time, Shipp led with 1,640 votes (40.8 percent) followed by Thornell with 1,058 (26.3 percent). Paul Bolster received 841 votes (20.9 percent) and Elena Kaplan earned 480 votes (11.9 percent).

Because no candidate received more than 50 percent of the vote, the top two will compete in the runoff. No Republican ran for the seat, meaning the runoff will decide the outcome of the race.

"Fortunately, we have three more weeks that we get to take our message to the voters. In that time, we'll be reaching out to the other campaigns," said Branden Lane, Thornell's campaign manager.

If elected, Thornell would become the first openly gay man and first openly HIV-positive person in the General Assembly.

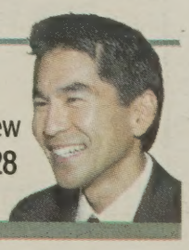
Drenner and Thornell were both endorsed by the National Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund,

Please see **ELECTION** on **Page 8**

STUDENTS WIN: Judge says White County can't block gay club by **Kerry Pacer**. **Page 5**

AMENDMENT LOSES: U.S. House rejects constitutional ban on gay marriage. **Page 15**

KID-FRIENDLY: Toy Party creator **Alex Wan** launches new back-to-school benefit. **Page 28**



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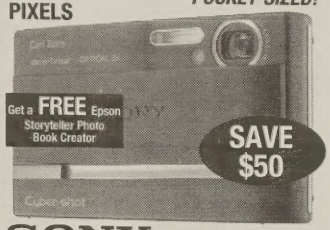

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Aries (March 21-April 20)
Invite some of your tribe over to your place for an informal supper and/or some fun and games. To avoid useless arguments, keep an open mind and listen to opinions you normally wouldn't want to hear.

Taurus (April 21-May 21)
Be willing to open communication with relatives. Accommodation will require difficult backtracking, and you may need to be willing to retract hurtful words. Maybe they should, too, but you'll do better to forgive and forget.

Gemini (May 22-June 21)
Make sure your accounts are all in order. That could require some outside help. Any discrepancy or outstanding bills could cause arguments with your partner or otherwise put you into a cranky mood, making it difficult to socialize.

Cancer (June 22-July 23)
Feeling old and stuck in your job? It's just a mood that will pass, so don't let it poison your work environment. Focus on domestic finances and put aside some money for retail therapy. Finding bargains and staying within budget will be the most satisfying part.

Leo (July 24-August 22)
Act like Garbo and go into seclusion – all the better to make a grand entrance later! Take the opportunity to charge your batteries, organize your private affairs, and open your creative channels through meditation and relaxation.

Virgo (August 23-September 23)
Take some time out to fuss with stuff at home. The itch won't go away yet, but you'll go even crazier if you don't scratch it. Don't take on family unless you want to trigger an explosion you'll have to clean up later.

Libra (September 24-October 23)
Miscommunication and other little glitches seem to sidetrack things at work. Stuff happens, and it will all work out. Just don't let it throw you. Focus on long-range planning and cultivating relations with colleagues.

Scorpio (October 24-November 22)
You can get a lot of attention for your outspokenness and your wisdom, but any mistakes in your presentation will be quickly noticed. Nobody's perfect! The best way to be right most of the time is to accept correction graciously.

Sagittarius (November 23-December 21)
Explore traditionally forbidden realms of eros and metaphysics, but not necessarily together. Take it easy. Your natural enthusiasm can take you over edges you'd rather move toward gently.

Capricorn (December 22-January 20)
Doubts and worries about your relationship are more about you than your love. Trust and openness will help in the long run, although it could get messy with misunderstandings in the meantime. Sexual experimentation can help you deepen your partnership – or find one.

Aquarius (January 21-February 19)
Be helpful to your colleagues, but hold back just a bit so as not to be overbearing. That gives you a rather thin line to walk, but if you can manage it, you'll find opportunities in the long run for yourself and your associates.

Pisces (February 20-March 20)
Let work be fun. You can find opportunities to boost morale and productivity. Your approach may rankle the boss a bit – be ready to explain and negotiate – but, with some adjustment, your lighter style will prove helpful.

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sound off!

Editors' note: The following comments about the gay issues of the day or stories published in Southern Voice were made by readers online at **www.sovo.com/soundoff** or by telephone at **1-800-485-6907**.

Drenner's campaign manager undoes magnanimous victory

Re "Drenner headed to victory" (www.sovo.com, July 19):

It is a shame that the first thing Karla Drenner has to do after a hard fought victory is apologize for her campaign manager's inappropriate attack on the gay community. Some things truly are better left unsaid.

So is Karla Drenner's campaign manager suggesting she championed the rights of gay Georgians because she expected something in return, not because it was the right thing to do? And since Karla didn't get what Phyllis Huster believes to be an appropriate quid pro quo from gays, will Karla no longer do so? I think the last time we heard this type of logic was out of the mouth of Billy McKinney regarding the gay community abandoning his daughter.

Karla Drenner should do herself a big favor and get a new campaign manager next go round. If she thought support from the gay community was lacking this time, Phyllis Huster just assured that it will be even slimmer with her post-election bitch slap. Can you say Keisha Waites?

There was fourth option in Dem gubernatorial race

Re "Governor's race offers little for gay voters" (news, July 14):

Notice that both Cathy Cox and Mark Taylor used open-ended rhetoric that allowed both gay and anti-gay voters to hear whatever they wanted to hear. Taylor saying that he would have to "consider" anti-gay legislation is not the same thing as saying he would approve it. I don't agree that leaving the ballot blank is the best way to register disgust over the Cathy Cox flip-flop. Let's be realistic: Cox is most likely to win on the Dems' side; she has run the better campaign and is a more polished candidate. Taylor couldn't even get it together to shave before the debate, and kept equivocating while offering a greasy grin. While he may not be the leading candidate, only Mac McCarley has consistently backed equal treatment for gay Georgians. He's a buzz-cut, no-nonsense Navy veteran who has rural appeal. Voting for him instead of Cox could give Taylor the Dem slot against Reed, but I would suggest that those who cannot hold their noses to vote for Cox cast ballots of conscience for McCarley.

Not voting at all is exactly like surrendering all of your freedoms. Not voting at all allows the present leadership to jack up this state even more, and that will be your fault. If not for Mark Taylor or Cathy Cox, vote for one of the other two candidates in the primary. Personally, I think the biggest billed Democratic candidates are just putting on an extreme homophobic front to get elected. What else can you expect from Georgia? True understanding?

The stupidest thing or time to stop settling?

Re "Win, lose or draw" (editorial by Laura Douglas-Brown, July 14):

Listen, I am a lesbian who very much wants to have the same rights with my partner of 14 years, as any married person, but I am telling you, we are making a big mistake if we skip the governor's vote. By not voting, we are letting Sonny Perdue win. The stupidest thing you could ever do is to ask others not to vote!

Congratulations to SoVo and Georgia Equality for their stand on the Democratic primary for governor. It is about time we stopped settling for the lesser of evils. I hope gay Georgians across the state follow their advice. But more importantly, I hope LGBT Georgians actually vote for a change, in large numbers. The Democrats have no backbone on a number of issues, from the war to our rights. But how can we expect the Dems to ever grow one if we don't vote, contribute or campaign for them? The religious right has so much power because they have banded together and organized. On the state and federal levels, we are second-class citizens. It's well past time to be heard. Cathy Cox and Mark Taylor, can you hear me now? Good.

Trans prostitutes don't bring empathy to their cause

Re "Atlanta police crack down on trans prostitution" (news, July 14):

As a gay man, Midtown homeowner and member of the Midtown Ponce Security Alliance, I applaud the recent sting efforts by Atlanta Police against prostitution and vagrancy in our neighborhood. No offense to Dee Dee Chamblee of LaGender Inc., but her rationalization was pretty pitiful. Every transgender person who tricks on my street just makes me all the less empathetic to their cause.

Comparing Piedmont apples to Cabbagetown oranges

Re "Park punishment" (news, July 7):

Two questions: (1) How does Southern Voice know that the Cabbagetown Park group consisted of straight people? (2) What "extraneous" charges were levied against the Piedmont Park group that might account for their heavier sentences?

atlanta news

Federal judge rules for gay student club

White County can't block gay-straight group, allow other clubs

By DYANA BAGBY

A U.S. District Court judge ruled July 14 that administrators at White County High School in Cleveland, Ga., violated the federal Equal Access Act when they banned all non-curricular clubs as a way to keep out a gay-straight alliance.

Attorneys with the ACLU of Georgia, representing teens who fought to create a gay support club at the high school, argued their case June 12 before U.S. District Court Judge William O'Kelley.

The July 14 ruling means the students will now be able to meet on campus during the upcoming school year, rather than off-campus.

At the trial, the ACLU proved that the school did not shut down all non-curricular clubs, but continued to allow several non-curricular clubs to meet, including a dance team as well as a "shotgun club."

Beth Littrell, associate legal director of the ACLU of Georgia, argued much of the case at trial. She said the judge's ruling is a very clear statement that schools cannot discriminate.

"This is a very clear victory for these students and all LGBT students and all students involved," she said. "This ruling sends a message that schools cannot make an end-run around the law."

Kerry Pacer, 18, a lesbian who led the effort in early 2005 to start the gay-straight alliance, said she was "overjoyed" with the news.

"I was ecstatic when I heard," she said. "I can't believe it, but then I can believe it — all the evidence and facts showed they were discriminating against us and even other students."

Pacer will be entering Georgia State University in August to study law and won't be a member of PRIDE, the club she and her friends fought for.

"I'm happy though because now I know my friends will actually have a place to go," she said.

O'Kelley wrote in his ruling that "extracurricular activities have significant educational value."

"PRIDE was not the only student group that was prohibited from meeting on school premises during the 2005-2006 school year," he ruled. "These other groups are also entitled to protection under the EAA [Equal Access Act]. Although plaintiffs have raised claims only on behalf of PRIDE and its members, the injunction would also pertain to other student groups that have been denied equal access."

White County Superintendent Paul Shaw said he and the school board are reviewing the ruling. A school board meeting was scheduled for July 20.

"Right now, we haven't talked with the school board about it," Shaw said July 17. "We'll look at it with the board and talk with our attorney to see what comes next."

Shaw declined to say if the school district might appeal the decision.

Lesbian teens **Kerry Pacer** (left) and **Kimberlee Gould** testified June 12 in federal court that White County High School administrators blocked their efforts to form a gay-straight alliance. (Photo by Dyana Bagby)

ACLU attorney **Beth Littrell** called the federal court ruling 'a very clear victory' for the students she represents.

Club sparks controversy

Pacer and her peers began trying to form the gay-straight alliance in January 2005, sparking months of heated debate including a contentious school board meeting in February 2005 in which local preachers railed against homosexuality. Rev. Fred Phelps' church in Topeka, Kan., which is known for protesting the funeral of slain gay college student Matthew Shepard, also picketed at the school.

Under pressure from the ACLU, school administrators agreed to allow PRIDE to form on March 22, 2005. But two days later, White County High School Principal Bryan Dorsey recommended to the school board that all non-academic clubs be banned from meeting on the campus. Dorsey's initiative went into effect for the 2005-2006 school year.

Testifying at the June 12 trial, Pacer, who graduated from the high school May 26, recalled how other students jeered when she was presented a rose by a female student during a Valentine's assembly last year. School officials did not intervene, Pacer said.

Kimberlee Gould, another plaintiff who is a lesbian, testified that the PRIDE club was necessary "because bullying at our school is ridiculous" and said she had been called "fag," "queer," "lesbian" and "dyke."

But Dorsey testified he had great concerns about allowing a club that dealt with sexual orientation to meet at the high school level.

The public negative response to the club's formation "overwhelmed him," Dorsey said.

Students started requesting to form a redneck club, a Southern heritage club and also a Black Panther club.

"It became very obvious to me that we became focused on clubs and the students became more inflamed," he said.

"I always am concerned about kids dealing with touchy subjects ... I tried to look for the path of least resistance," he said, explaining his decision to ban non-curricular clubs.

School played favorites?

During the trial, ACLU attorneys presented Dorsey with numerous sheets of announcements made this year over the school's intercom about meetings of such clubs as the dance team, the Beta Club, the Youth Advisory Council, the prom committee and the 4-H Club. These clubs are all non-curricular clubs, the ACLU argued, but were still allowed to meet on campus.

Dorsey said it was his understanding the shotgun club was a component of the 4-H Club, but that he was unaware it met on campus.

During closing arguments, Phil Hartley, attorney for the school system, said school administrators attempted to do what was best during a highly disruptive time.

"[Dorsey] made a good faith effort to create a limited open forum. He clearly went through a thoughtful decision," he told O'Kelley, the judge.

After the trial, Littrell said it's not the ACLU's desire to stop any club from meeting, but to give all clubs equal and fair treatment.

"White County High School has been trying to get around that by saying it has banned all clubs, when in reality it's been playing favorites and letting clubs that administrators like continue to meet," she said. "We don't want to ban clubs from meeting, we want equal treatment for all clubs."

Dyana Bagby can be reached at **dbagby@sovo.com**.

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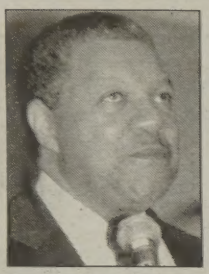
Fulton delays DP pension benefits again

By ZACK HUDSON



A vote on legislation that would offer domestic partner pension benefits to Fulton County government employees, sponsored by Fulton County Commissioner **Robb Pitts**, was postponed for a second time on July 19.

A measure to extend survivor's benefits to the domestic partners of Fulton County government employees who are covered under the county's pension plan was delayed again at the July 19 Fulton County Board of Commissioners meeting.

The push to "extend the designation of death beneficiaries of the Fulton County Defined Benefit Plan to include individuals registered in a Certified Committed Relationship," is in the form of an amendment to the county's employee benefit policy. The amendment last appeared before the board in May, when it was tabled for 60 days by a 4-3 vote of the seven-member board.

"I really don't see what was to gain by delaying it," Commissioner Robb Pitts, who holds the commission's at-large District 2 post, said in May.

District 7 Commissioner William "Bill" Edwards left the July 19 meeting early, prompting District 6 Commissioner Nancy Boxill, who co-sponsored the amendment along with Pitts, to ask for the new delay.

"I'd like to bring this back before the whole board," Boxill said.

Her request was approved by Commission Chair Karen Handel without an official vote by the commission.

Mary Louise Upshaw, who works as a municipal planner for the county, urged the board to pass the amendment, which would add pension payments to the stable of benefits Fulton County employees have been allowed to share with their domestic partners since those benefits were approved in 2003.

"Please remember that only a very few people among the population of your employees are even eligible to for this," Upshaw said.

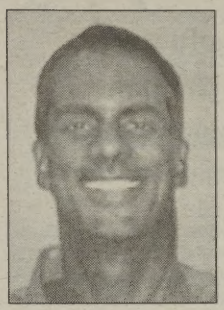
County Manager Thomas Andrews estimated that Fulton County has only about 19 employees in Certified Committed Relationships, the county's employee registry for domestic partnerships and whose retirement savings remain in the older pension plan.

"To have this financial support truncated at the same time as the sorrow and loss of a partner is shameful," Upshaw said.

Zack Hudson can be reached at **zhudson@sovo.com.**

Gay business group leader resigns

By ZACK HUDSON



Former Atlanta Executive Network president Dan Lax resumed duties after **Stephen Julien** resigned the post July 6.

After six months on the job, Stephen Julien resigned as board president of the Atlanta Executive Network July 6, citing personal reasons including a love for endurance sports, according to a press release from the gay business group.

Julien came on board as president in January and was to serve a full-year term. Dan Lax, who served as AEN president during 2005, immediately stepped in to take over Julien's role.

"My time with AEN has been enriching, and I'll continue to support the organization in other ways," Julien said in the AEN release that announced the changeover.

Lax said he would likely fill the vacated position until the end of the year, when current vice-president Maggie Lopez is expected to take over the role for 2007.

"If we decide to reorganize between now and then for any reason — which I don't see happening — it would be by a normal board vote in the course of normal business," Lax said.

Julien, who Lax said is attending the Gay Games in Chicago, could not be reached for comment. Lax said that Julien's love of sports is one reason he gave up his post on the AEN board.

"He is very dedicated to gay sports, and good leaders make priorities," Lax said.

Julien works with the energy company Mirant and is involved in endurance sports, including swimming and triathlons. He is an active member of Atlanta's gay swim team, the Rainbow Trout.

AEN, a non-profit group, touts itself as one of the largest gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender professional networking organizations in the country.

AEN officers are normally elected in November, taking office at the beginning of the following year.

Lax is the owner of Buzzword Media, an Atlanta-based company that produces websites and videos for businesses, professionals, artists and performers.

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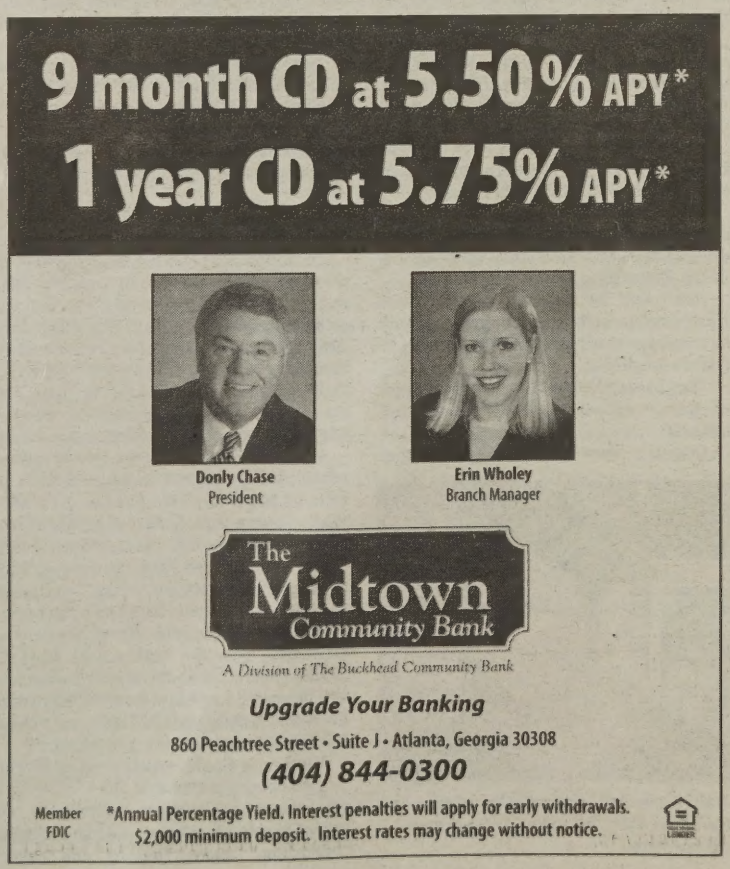
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atlanta news

Gay groups celebrate election results

Reed rejected by voters, Cox candidacy crumbles

By RYAN LEE

Even before many gay election parties kicked into high gear Tuesday night, Ralph Reed — one of the political operatives most responsible for the religious right's rise to power in Georgia and nationally — approached a podium inside the InterContinental Buckhead Hotel to announce, "Tonight, my candidacy for lieutenant governor comes to an end."

Reed's early concession speech drew raucous reactions from gay and lesbian election-watchers gathered at Einstein's restaurant in Midtown, and from those assembled at Perk Caféé in East Atlanta to cheer on Allen Thornell's attempt to become the first openly gay man elected to the Georgia General Assembly.

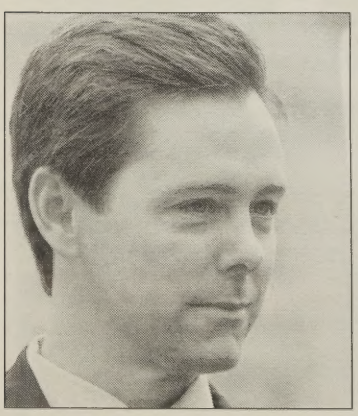
A similar celebration erupted at the home of openly gay state Rep. Karla Drenner (D-Avondale Estates), who had yet to receive any precinct figures in her re-election bid by the time Reed bowed out just before 10 p.m.

But few gay people were more elated by Reed's decisive defeat than Randy New, who along with his partner and a co-worker were at his home eating pizza, "laughing our heads off" as Reed announced his loss. In recent weeks New and his law firm, Kitchens New, encouraged gay voters to crossover into the Republican primary to vote against Reed in his contest versus state Sen. Casey Cagle (R-Gainesville).

"The importance of Ralph Reed was not just local — Georgia would have been a good springboard for him to head off to national office," New said.

New also considered Secretary of State Cathy Cox's loss to Lt. Gov. Mark Taylor in the Democratic gubernatorial contest to be a victory for gay and lesbian voters.

"Cathy Cox had no place to go later in the evening, when it got to the areas you would've predicted she would've got a lot of votes — but she didn't," New said.



Former Christian Coalition leader **Ralph Reed** suffered a 'massive rejection' by voters in his bid to become the Republican nominee for lieutenant governor. (Photo by AP)

Gay impact unclear

Democratic pollster Beth Schapiro viewed Cox and Reed's losses in a similar light.

"The voters, both Democrats and Republicans, rejected the politics of fear and gay bashing, and they rejected people who wavered on their support of gay rights," said Schapiro, who is gay. "They said, 'Look, we don't like these candidates who campaign by beating up on gay folks.'"

But Schapiro doubted the gay crossover campaign New and others advocated manifested on Election Day, since far more residents voted in the Democratic primary than in the Republican one, including in counties with large numbers of gay voters like Fulton and DeKalb.

"If there had been some massive crossover vote I don't think we would have seen that," Schapiro said.

Cagle won the statewide vote against Reed 56.1 to 43.9 percent, but ran slightly stronger in DeKalb County — where he won 64.1 percent of the vote, compared to Reed's 35.9 percent — and in Fulton County, where Cagle prevailed 62.8 to 37.2 percent, according to unofficial results available from the Secretary of State's office at press time. Results from individual precincts in Fulton and DeKalb counties were not available at press time.

Until precinct-level voter breakdowns are released, it's unclear whether gay voters made any impact in the Republican lieutenant governor's race, especially since so many factions were gunning for Reed, according to University of Georgia political scientist Charles Bullock.

"It's going to be a fairly large tent of celebrants [taking credit for Reed's defeat]," Bullock said. "It was a massive rejection across the board."

Wrong turn for religious right?

The widespread repudiation of Reed's candidacy is evidence that "the extremist right wing of the Republican party is losing momentum," said Georgia Equality Executive Director Chuck Bowen.

Reed led the national Christian Coalition during its heyday in the late '80s and early '90s, and recently served as chair of the Georgia Republican Party, but became entrenched in the scandal involving convicted Washington lobbyist Jack Abramoff.

"The big loser in this is the Christian Coalition because of Ralph Reed's indelible linkage to it," said Bullock, who noted that Sadie Fields, chair of the Christian Coalition of Georgia, supported Reed. "Whatever votes the Christian Coalition can deliver in the primary wasn't enough."

Reed wasn't the only prominent religious conservative to lose convincingly at the polls, as former Christian Coalition Volunteer of the Year Kay Godwin captured only 39.3 percent of the vote in the Republican primary for House District 178 against Mark Williams.

State Sen. Bill Stephens (R-Canton), the original sponsor of Georgia's constitutional amendment banning gay marriage in 2004, also failed to win his bid for the Republican nomination for Secretary of State. Stephens finished second with 32.6 percent of the vote, and competes in an Aug. 8 runoff against Fulton County Commission Chair Karen Handel, who captured 43.6 percent of the vote.

Impact of marriage ruling

Cox attracted lots of gay and lesbian support until mid-May, when a Fulton County judge tossed out Georgia's constitutional gay marriage ban. Cox, who called the amendment "unnecessary" in 2004, responded to the ruling by immediately announcing her opposition to same-sex marriage, and her support for a special legislative session to ensure the amendment was on the November ballot.

The Georgia Supreme Court upheld the amendment, making the special session unnecessary.

"I think a couple of months ago, before the marriage amendment resurfaced, Cathy Cox was well positioned to win this race," Schapiro said. "She mishandled it ..... and it took a lot of momentum out of her campaign."

Georgia Equality encouraged gay voters to skip the Democratic race for governor, which likely exacerbated the self-destruction of the Cox campaign, Bowen said.

Despite Taylor staking out hostile positions on many gay issues, Bowen said Georgia Equality plans to request a meeting with the Democratic challenger to Gov. Sonny Perdue in an attempt to find common ground.

"I think it's important for us to use the votes from yesterday to remind him how important [gay voters] will be to his election bid," Bowen said.

Ryan Lee can be reached at rlee@sovo.com

How they fared

A look at races of interest to gay voters:

** Denotes primary winner faces no opposition in November general election.*
Numbers based on unofficial election results available from the Secretary of State at press time.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Democrat: Former state Rep. **Jim Martin** (D-Atlanta), who was endorsed by Georgia Equality, led the field of five candidates with 41.2 percent of the vote, despite an anonymous last-minute telephone campaign featuring a stereotypically gay voice urging voters to back him on gay issues. He faces former state Sen. **Greg Hecht** (D-Jonesboro), who received 36.4 percent. Hecht's campaign denied responsibility for the phone calls. The winner takes on Republican **Casey Cagle** in November.

U.S. CONGRESS

4th District: U.S. Rep. **Cynthia McKinney** (D-Ga.), endorsed by the Human Rights Campaign, captured 47.1 percent of the vote, but was forced into a runoff with challenger **Hank Johnson**, who finished with 44.4 percent. The winner faces Republican **Catherine Davis** in November.

GEORGIA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

District 44: State Rep. **Sheila Jones** (D-Atlanta), endorsed by Georgia Equality and Atlanta Stonewall Democrats, was re-elected, winning 63.2 percent of the vote.*

District 56: Gay challenger **Luther Maloney** mustered only 37 percent of the vote, losing to state Rep. **Kathy Ashe** (D-Atlanta), who was endorsed by Georgia Equality and the Atlanta Stonewall Democrats.*

District 59: State Rep. **Douglas Dean** (D-Atlanta), endorsed by Georgia Equality and Atlanta Stonewall Democrats, slipped into a runoff with 44.9 percent of the vote. He face gay-friendly challenger **Margaret Kaiser**, who polled 40.5 percent.*

District 65: For the second consecutive election, Georgia Equality and Atlanta Stonewall Democrats-endorsed candidate **T.J. Copeland** lost his challenge to state Rep. **Sharon Beasley-Teague**, (D-Fairburn), who was one of only four black legislators to support a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage in 2004. Copeland took 39.3 percent of the vote to Beasley-Teague's 60.7 percent.*

District 84: Stacey Abrams, a legal adviser to Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin during the city's dispute with the Druid Hills Golf Club, was elected to the state House with 51.2 percent of the vote. She was endorsed by Georgia Equality and the Atlanta Stonewall Democrats.*

GEORGIA SENATE

District 36: Nan Orrock, one of the leading gay rights supporters in the Georgia House of Representatives, successfully moved over to the Senate by winning 62.2 percent of the vote against **Grace Davis**.

District 55: Georgia Equality-endorsed state Sen. **Gloria Butler** (D-Decatur), who drew the ire of openly gay state Rep. **Karla Drenner** (D-Avondale Estates) for donating to Drenner's opponent, was re-elected after winning 79.8 percent of the vote.

LOCAL RACES

Fulton County Commission Chair: Lesbian candidate **Keisha Sean Waites** again fell short in her bid for public office, losing to **John Eaves** 59.3 to 40.6 percent. Eaves faces Republican **Lee Morris** in November.

DeKalb County Commission District 2: Georgia Equality-endorsed **Jeff Rader** appeared to eke out a victory, defeating **Don Broussard** 50.98 to 49.02 percent. Rader faces Republican **Hubert Rambo** in November.

Compiled by Dyana Bagby and Ryan Lee

atlanta news

Thornell campaign looks to Aug. 8 vote

ELECTION, continued from Page 1

Georgia Equality and the Atlanta Stonewall Democrats, with Georgia Equality calling electing the two gay candidates its top priority in the primary.

Drenner thanks 'new family'

Drenner, set to serve her fourth term in the state House, faced her first opposition this year since being elected in 2000. She was hampered after being bedridden for much of her campaign due to a hysterectomy and ensuing infection.

"You took care of me when I was sick. I made a new family from this," she said during her victory speech.

Supporters, many who stood at polling places beginning at 7 a.m. on Election Day to wave Drenner signs until the polls closed at 7 p.m., said they supported her for her stance on the environment, education, senior citizens and gay rights.

Mary Lee, 14, granddaughter of Scottdale senior citizen activist and longtime Drenner supporter Annie Reed, said she was proud to work for Drenner although she's not old enough to vote.

"She helps us with our community and it's rare to see people helping Scottdale," she said.

Tad Pace, 30, a gay man who moved into Drenner's district two years ago, said he was proud when he realized she was his representative.

"This is the first time I've helped on a campaign and I want to make sure she stays," he said.

After declaring victory, Drenner said she "learned a lot from the gay community" during this campaign.

"I appreciate everything they did for me. People came from outside my district to help me, they went door-to-door for me, they fundraised for me. I appreciate their support and the support of Georgia Equality, the Victory Fund and the Human Rights Campaign," she said.

"I want this victory to send a loud and clear message that we have power and we can exercise it in a coherent fashion."

Gay support lacking?

Earlier in the evening of July 18, while awaiting election results, Drenner's campaign manager criticized an alleged lack of gay support.

"The support was really about the community coming together — a combination of the gay community, the district community, and close friends and family. But if I were to rate the gay community [in supporting Karla], I would give them a D-minus," Phyllis Huster said.

"We had trouble finding volunteers and fundraising. She's been working for the gay community for six years and I won't name names, but the support seems to be behind new candidates," Huster said.

Drenner said July 19 she was "very disappointed" by Huster's comments and she did not speak on behalf of the campaign.

"She did not speak for me and I thought her comments were completely out of line," Drenner said, expressing gratitude for backing from both gay organizations and individuals.

"It was a tough race and it was gay people who showed up day after day after day," Drenner said Wednesday. "I want to personally thank everybody, and let them know I will be willing and ready ... to fight again for our rights as a community."

But Drenner is also focused on her many other constituents, including African Americans who make up much of her district.

"When you're me, you know they're going to use every dirty trick, including black churches using homophobia, but the people in House District 86 are not like that. They want someone to care for them and love them. They don't care about your private life," she said.

Victory Fund backing

On July 19, Huster amended her statement about lack of gay support to credit the Victory Fund for its backing. "Donors to the Victory Fund represented the largest gay group amount donated to Karla from the gay community," Huster said. Backing from Victory Fund leaders represents "the kind of support I'd like to see from future gay community efforts," Huster said.

Robin Brand, Victory Fund's senior vice president of politics and strategy, said the organization was thrilled with helping keep Drenner in office.

"We took her opponent very seriously because she had some important people behind her, but the results showed Drenner not only won, but won decisively — and that demonstrated she has delivered for the voters in her district," Brand said.

Although Brand declined to say how much money the Victory Fund donated to Drenner's campaign, she would say it was in the "thousands of dollars."

Drenner's campaign disclosure, filed July 19, stated she raised a total of $53,051 during the March 30 through June 30 reporting period, including $975 from the Victory Fund PAC and $1,000 from Georgia Equality. The disclosure's list of contributors of $101 or more is also peppered with local gay leaders and activists.

Thornell a 'consensus builder'

At Thornell's election night party at Perk Café in Glenwood Park, local gay and gay-friendly leaders continually dropped by to show support.

"I just like the way he thinks," said District 57 state Rep. Pat Gardner, who reclaimed her seat without opposition. "He's a consensus builder. His strategic thinking skills are what make him so successful in politics."

Nan Orrock, who won her bid to take over representing District 36 in the Georgia Senate, has been one of Thornell's chief supporters in the race for the state House seat she formerly represented.

"I'm just absorbed in what's happened here," she said.

Thornell addressed the energized crowd of some 50 people throughout the night awaiting polling results.

State Rep. **Karla Drenner** planted a victory kiss on her daughter during Tuesday night's election party at their home in Avondale Estates. (Photo by Dyana Bagby)

"Three months — that's what this campaign has been," Thornell said.

"The strategy going in was, frankly, to come in second," he said, igniting applause.

According to Brand of the Victory Fund, Thornell getting into a run-off is a huge first win for his campaign.

"He's a political operative and knows how to run a campaign, so he was a powerhouse going in," she said. "Now our plan is to reach out to our donor base and network support for Allen immediately to keep the momentum going and put him in office."

For the past two years Thornell has served as the deputy regional political director of the Service Employees International Union. He served as Georgia Equality's executive director from May 2002 until April 2004, and previously served on the organization's board of directors. Prior to that, he managed political campaigns in Utah and Georgia, and worked as an account supervisor at Fleishman-Hillard International.

Though Thornell has long been candid about his sexual orientation and being HIV positive, neither were major issues in his race.

"I think it's important, but we're not one issue people, and that's what the campaign is all about. Yes, I'm gay, but let's also talk about the work I've done with education, the work I've done with health care, and the things I can do for creating good paying jobs in Georgia and protecting our air and water," he said.

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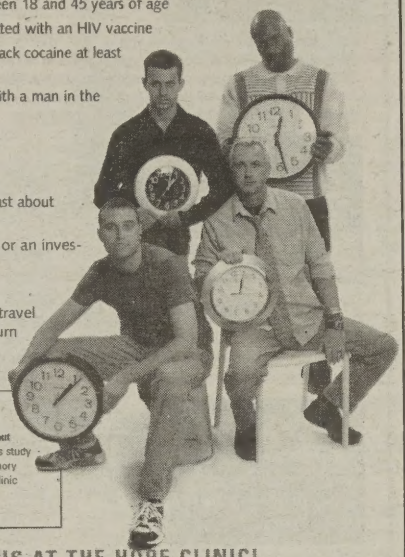

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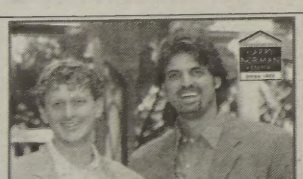

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news in brief

World Pride in Jerusalem threatened by Lebanese conflict

BERUIT, Lebanon — As military action in southern Lebanon and northern Israel enters its second week, plans for the World Pride event in Jerusalem on Aug. 6 appear threatened. Organizers are trying to reassure participants and spectators amid rumors of "bounty funds" for the murder of World Pride participants and talk of moving the event to Tel Aviv. "We are carefully monitoring the situation, while continuing our work towards Aug. 6, the opening date of the Jerusalem World Pride week," World Pride organizers said in a statement posted on the group's website. "During the current hostilities, Jerusalem is a calm spot, with a variety of public events going on as scheduled. We advise our guests from around the world to follow the news together with us, and hope together with us for peace." Meanwhile in Lebanon, the gay group Helem is boycotting World Pride out of opposition to Israel. "It began with a sit-in, in solidarity with Gaza, but then turned into relief work," Ghassan Makarem of Helem, told the Age newspaper in Australia.

An Israeli soldier holds a rainbow flag as hundreds participate in a Gay Pride parade in downtown Jerusalem two years ago. Organizer's intended next month's World Pride event in Jerusalem to bring a rare unity to a city torn by conflict. So far, it has succeeded in uniting conflicting religions against the plan. (Photo by Oded Balilty/AP)

Judge rules Conn. gay couples not harmed by civil unions law

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — Gay couples have not been harmed by the state's decision to legalize same-sex civil unions rather than grant them full marriage rights, a state Superior Court judge ruled July 12. The gay couples who brought suit plan to appeal the ruling to the state's highest court. "Civil union and marriage in Connecticut now share the same benefits, protections and responsibilities under law," Judge Patty Jenkins Pittman in New Haven wrote. "The Connecticut Constitution requires that there be equal protection and due process of law, not that there be equivalent nomenclature for such protection and process." Eight couples sued claiming civil unions are inferior and violate equal protection, due process and free expression and association. Connecticut became the second state in the nation, after Vermont, to enact civil unions when the Democrat-controlled legislature passed, and Republican Gov. M. Jodi Rell signed the measure into law last year.

Bush nominates gay man to head global AIDS office

WASHINGTON — President Bush nominated gay physician Mark R. Dybul July 17 to be United States Global AIDS Coordinator, a post at the State Department that has the rank of ambassador. If the U.S. Senate ratifies his nomination, Dybul would replace pharmaceutical industry executive Randall Tobias as head of a $15 billion program initiated by Bush and approved by Congress to combat AIDS in developing countries, with a focus on Africa. Bush appointed Tobias to another administration post. "[Dybul] is widely recognized as someone highly qualified for this position," said Carl Schmid, a gay Republican activist who serves as federal affairs director for the AIDS Institute, a national AIDS advocacy group. Dybul currently serves as acting U.S. global AIDS coordinator and chief medical officer at the State Department. He would become the third openly gay person to hold a U.S. ambassadorial position.

Raid on Albuquerque private gay gym investigated

ALBUQUERQUE — A private gym for gay men accused of selling alcohol to its customers without a license reopened July 10. The Pride Gym was raided July 1 and the club manager, Ron Cordova, 27, was arrested on a fourth-degree felony charge of unlawful sale of alcohol, the Albuquerque Tribune reported. The facility was subsequently closed for fire code violations. The ACLU of New Mexico and the gay rights group Equality New Mexico are contacting the estimated 30 patrons at the gym at the time of the raid, when state liquor law enforcement agents reportedly swept in with guns drawn. The patrons, some in their 70s and many wearing only towels, were reportedly handcuffed and placed face-down. Jim Plagens, deputy director for Special Investigations Division, has said his agents did not target the gym because it serves gays the Tribune reported.

Neb. and Tenn. courts allow marriage amendments

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Supporters of banning gay marriage won two major court rulings July 14, with a federal appeals court reinstating Nebraska's voter-approved ban on same-sex marriage and the Tennessee Supreme Court ruling that voters should have a say on the issue. In the Nebraska case, U.S. District Judge Joseph Bataillon had ruled that the ban was too broad and deprived gays of participation in the political process. The 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals disagreed, saying in its ruling Friday that the amendment "and other laws limiting the state-recognized institution of marriage to heterosexual couples are rationally related to legitimate state interests and therefore do not violate the Constitution of the United States." The Tennessee decision means that voters will be able to decide in November on a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage. The suit brought by the ACLU charged the state hadn't met the requirements in the state Constitution to put the issue on the ballot.

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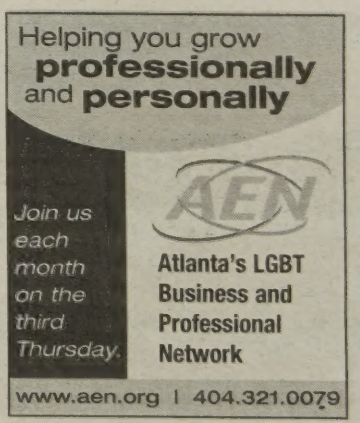
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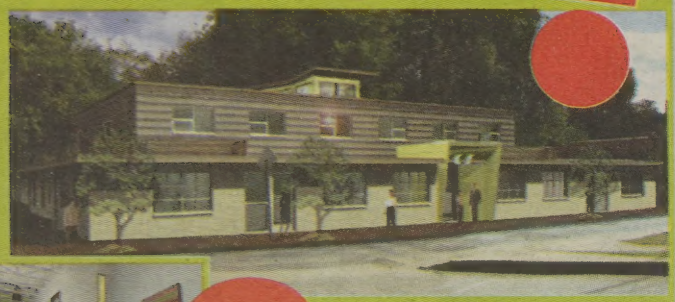

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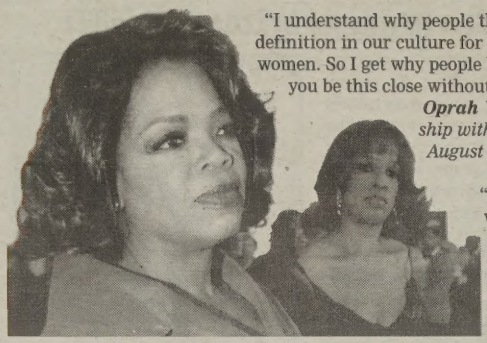


"I understand why people think we're gay. There isn't a definition in our culture for this kind of bond between women. So I get why people have to label it — how can you be this close without it being sexual?"

***Oprah Winfrey** on her close friendship with **Gayle King** (O Magazine, August issue)*

"The truth is, if we were gay, we would tell you, because there's nothing wrong with being gay."

Gayle King, *sharing her thoughts in the same article (O Magazine)*

"I want a beach in our community that's free of gays and lesbians, a place where we normal, heterosexual people can sunbathe and swim in peace and quiet."

Norwegian politician Odd Djoseland of the Progress Party, in a letter to a local newspaper prompted by his concern that gay men and lesbians would "drool" over heterosexual beachgoers (Aftenposten, July 11)

"Jake, why you sittin' in the front? I thought you liked it in the rear."

*Cyclist **Lance Armstrong** in an opening monologue while hosting the ESPY sports awards show to his friend Jake Gyllenhaal, who was sitting in the audience (July 16)*

"Come as You Are ... Fabulous."

Tagline for a new Hilton Hotels ad campaign targeting gay travelers (New York Times, July 16)

"I think it's going to be a big mess in the not-too-distant future."

William Tiedemann, AIDS director for the Cleveland Department of Public Health, on the opening of a new bathhouse in the city (Associated Press, July 17)

"Dobson also tried a little bullying himself, targeting a boy whom he sized up as a 'sissy.' But the boy gave him such a thrashing that Dobson concluded bullying wasn't for him."

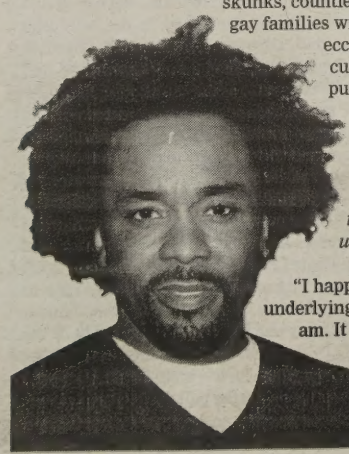
Passage from a profile of the childhood of Focus on the Family head James Dobson (Denver magazine 5280, July issue)

"The reality is the gay community has moved in remarkable ways over the past four years, even during a very tough political environment. And in most of the major victories, in some way or another, Republicans were needed and came through."

Patrick Guerriero, outgoing leader of the Log Cabin Republicans (Detroit News, July 17)

"We're talking Jamaican laborers, post-drag drag-queens, bearded ladies, senior transgendered people, interracial couples, straight families, Portuguese-American clans, Irish cops, circuit queens, jolly bears, cross-dressers, rabid raccoons, bustling skunks, countless dogs, power-lesbians, Bulgarian students, gay families with kids, Russian entrepreneurs, ancient eccentrics, nocturnal painters, bad musicians, cult film-makers, elegant novelists, excitable pundits — well, you get the idea. Cram them onto two streets, add summer heat, and all you get is a few random slurs? If only they could be so 'intolerant' everywhere else."

Blogger and regular Provincetown, Mass., visitor Andrew Sullivan on reports that gays in the beach resort town were calling heterosexuals "breeders" (AndrewSullivan.com, July 17)



"I happen to be black. I do white boys, too. There's an underlying gay sensibility to the film because I am who I am. It can't help but come through."

*Gay film producer **Lee Daniels**, on his directorial debut "Shadowboxer"; Daniels was a producer of "Monster's Ball," which won Halle Berry the 2001 Oscar for best actress (Washington Blade, July 21)*

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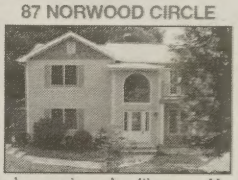

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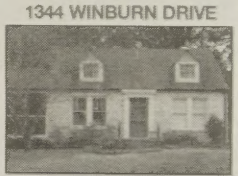

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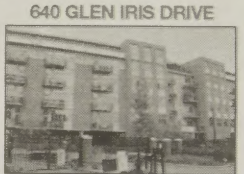

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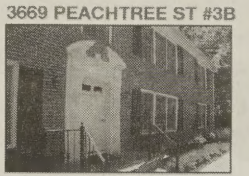

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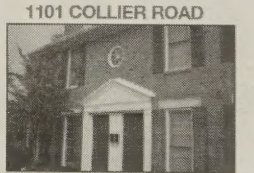

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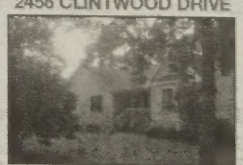

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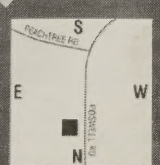

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national news

U.S. House rejects gay marriage ban

Vote falls 46 short, gaining little new ground

By LOU CHIBBARO JR.

The U.S. House of Representatives defeated a proposed constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage July 18 following a 90-minute debate over whether same-sex unions would harm the institution of marriage.

The Marriage Protection Amendment received a majority vote of 236 House members in favor and 187 opposed, with one member voting "present" and nine members not voting. Supporters came up 46 votes short of the 282 votes, or two-thirds majority of those present, needed for approving a change in the Constitution.

The measure is "all for the purpose of pandering to a narrow political base," said Rep. Tammy Baldwin, a lesbian Democrat from Wisconsin. "This hateful and unnecessary amendment is unworthy of our great Constitution."

The vote came six weeks after the Senate decisively defeated the same amendment and nearly two years after both bodies voted down the amendment during the hotly contested 2004 presidential election.

When the House voted on the measure in 2004, it fell 49 votes short of passage. Then as now, the vote was largely along party lines, with most Republicans favoring the amendment and most Democrats opposing it.

Twenty-seven Republicans voted against the amendment, the same number as in 2004. In 2004, 36 Democrats crossed party lines to vote for the amendment; Tuesday, 34 did so.

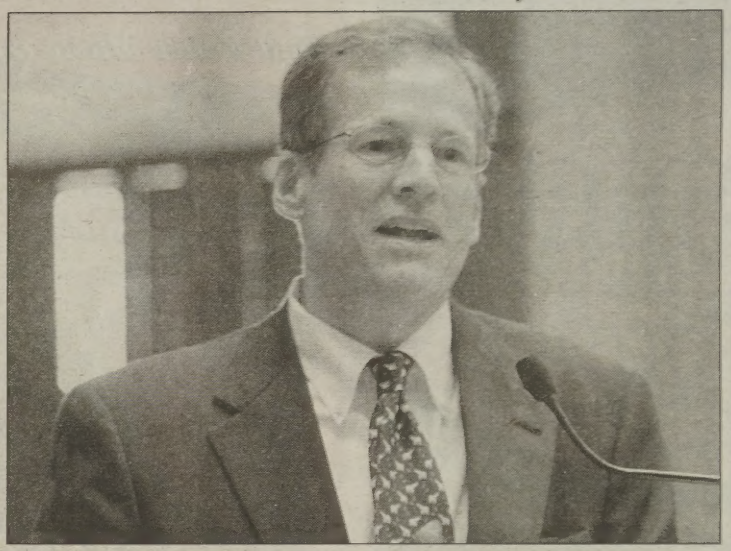
"Republican House leaders have now failed twice in their shameful election year ploys using gay and lesbian families as punching bags," said Joe Solmonese, president of the Human Rights Campaign, a national gay political group that helped coordinated opposition to the amendment.

But supporters said the vote would make a difference when people go to the polls in November.

"The overwhelming majority of the American people support traditional marriage," said Rep. Marilyn Musgrave, the Colorado Republican who sponsored the amendment. "The people have a right to know whether their elected representatives agree with them."

The Marriage Protection Amendment was part of the "American Values Agenda," a collection of bills pushed by social conservatives and brought to the House floor by GOP leaders. The agenda items included a bill to protect the Pledge of Allegiance and a planned vote on President Bush's veto of a bill promoting embryonic stem cell research.

Bush has asked, and social conservatives demanded, that the gay marriage ban be considered in the months preceding this year's election.



Republican Congressman **Jack Kingston** of Georgia, who led House debate in support of the amendment banning gay marriage, says federal courts are threatening to overturn the Defense of Marriage Act, a 1996 law that allows states to refuse to recognize same-sex marriages performed in other states.

The White House released a statement on the day of the vote urging passage of the amendment.

"When activist judges insist on redefining the fundamental institution of marriage for their states or potentially for the entire country, the only alternative left to make the people's voice heard is an amendment to the Constitution," President Bush is quoted as saying.

'No traction'

In 2004, House members voted in favor of the amendment by a margin of 227 to 186, with 20 members not voting. This week, 236 members voted for the measure, with just nine members not voting, giving the amendment nine more "yes" votes than it received in 2004. Opponents picked up one more vote this time around, garnering 187 "no" votes compared to 186 in 2004.

Among the 20 House members who did not vote in 2004, 12 voted against the amendment this time. Three of the House members who did not vote in 2004 voted for the amendment Tuesday, with just one — Rep. Danny Davis (D-Ill.) — once again missing the marriage vote.

Among the non-voters in 2004 who voted "no" this time, eight are Democrats and most opposed the amendment from the start. This suggests that the nine additional votes that backers of the amendment picked up this year represent a net gain in support, most likely from newly elected GOP House members.

"We don't think supporters made any significant gain this time," said HRC spokesperson Jay Smith Brown.

"In spite of intense lobbying, the right wing failed to get this appalling amendment through the House — just as it failed in the Senate," echoed Matt Foreman, executive director of the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force. "Clearly there's no traction in this issue."

Momentum favors state bans

The failure of efforts to amend the Constitution at the federal level has contrasted with successful attempts at changing state constitutions through ballot measures.

Forty-five states have passed either state constitutional amendments banning gay marriage or state statutes prohibiting same-sex couples from marrying. Even in Massachusetts, the only state that allows gay marriage, the state's high court recently ruled that a proposed constitutional amendment to ban future gay marriages can be placed on the ballot.

"Our momentum in the states is extremely strong, and Washington is playing catch-up," said Matt Daniels, president of the Alliance for Marriage.

Daniels, who was involved in drafting the Marriage Protection Amendment's language, said it was essential that Congress eventually set a national standard. Members of Congress are "the only hope for seeing marriage protected in this country and they should be on the record," he said.

But Congressman Barney Frank (D-Mass.), who is gay, said the amendment would prevent states such as his own, where thousands of same-sex couples have married over the past two years, from making decisions on what constitutes marriage.

"This amendment says that even if the people of Massachusetts, after four years of same-sex marriage being in existence, vote to ratify it by a majority, their vote does not count," Frank said during the House debate on the amendment. "This amendment cancels out a referendum."

Baldwin, who became the first open lesbian to win election to Congress, told her House colleagues during the debate that the amendment would, for the first time, change the U.S. Constitution so it would take away rights from citizens.

"I want to see the day when I can protect my family, my life partner of 10 years, through the same laws and with the same obligations, responsibilities and rights as can straight Americans," she said.

"These are my aspirations, both as an American and a member of Congress, to see the Constitution that I have sworn to support and protect illuminating the path to justice and equality for more and more Americans," she said.

Ga. rep leads fight for amendment

Rep. Jack Kingston (R-Ga.), who led House debate in support of the amendment, said federal courts were threatening to overturn the Defense of Marriage Act, a 1996 law passed by Congress and signed by President Clinton that allows states to refuse to recognize same-sex marriages performed in other states.

Even if that statute were to be upheld in the courts, Kingston said, he and many other amendment supporters believe a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage is needed.

"The purpose of this is to say that no government entity, legislative, executive or judicial, shall be allowed to alter the definition of marriage from one man and one woman," he said.

Musgrave echoed the views of a number of her GOP House colleagues in linking the amendment to the protection of children.

"Within the institution of marriage, society offers special support and encouragement to the men and women who together make children," she said. "Because marriage is deeply implicated in the interest of children, ... I urge my colleagues to support public policy that strengthens marriage and vote in favor of this amendment."

Congressman Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.), who led the debate in opposition to the amendment, joined Frank in challenging supporters to show how allowing gays to marry would harm the institution of marriage.

"I have been searching in vain for some indication of what might happen to my marriage, or to the marriage of anyone in this room, if loving couples, including couples with custody of children, are permitted to enjoy the blessings of matrimony," he said.

"Is there a member of this House who believes that his or her own marriage would be destroyed by someone else's same-sex marriage somewhere in America? I would welcome an explanation of what he or she thinks would happen to his or her marriage and why," Nadler demanded.

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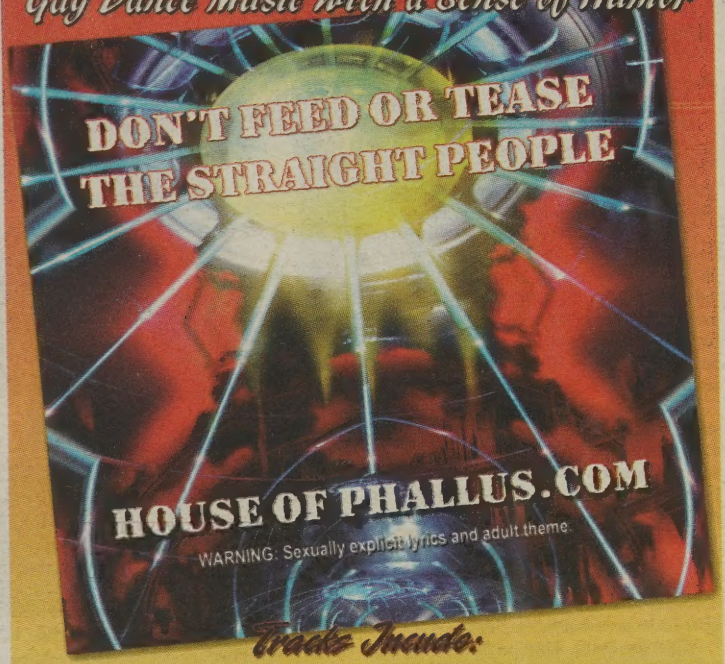

Tracks Inside:

1. SAILED THE SEVEN SEAS (ON MY KNEES)
2. AND THEN HE KISSED ME (AND THEN HE FRISKED ME)
3. YO HO HO
4. INVINCIBLE (LOVE IN OLIVE DRAB)
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national news

Ala. elects first openly gay state lawmaker

Todd squeaks by challenger for state House seat

By DYANA BAGBY

Lesbian Patricia Todd was expected to make history this week by winning a tight runoff for a seat in the Alabama legislature after a July 18 Democratic primary runoff.

With 97 percent of precincts reporting, Todd was leading the race for the state House District 54 by a slim 59 votes over opponent Gaynell Hendricks, according to unofficial results from the Alabama Secretary of State's Office available at press time on July 19.

Todd had 1,173 votes (51.29 percent) to Hendrick's 1,114 votes (48.71 percent).

Provisional ballots were to be counted July 20, but Todd said the trends show her lead will hold.

"We knew it would be close and never took any votes for granted," she said July 19. "People have negative feelings about Alabama, but this victory demonstrates people want leadership."

There is no Republican candidate, meaning Todd will win the seat if the numbers hold up. She would become the first openly gay state lawmaker in Alabama, according to the National Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund.

Hendricks had not conceded by press time.

Before the election, she told the Associated Press that her opponent's sexual orientation was not a factor in the race.

"It was never an issue for me," Hendricks said, according to AP. "The issues to me are finding ways to reduce crime, improve health care, education, public transportation, economic development."

Todd, associate director of AIDS Alabama, will represent the 54th District, which includes Birmingham, where she lives. Birmingham is also home to a large gay population and voters there helped put Todd over the top, she acknowledged.

"Many gay people [here] had never been political before and they can see now we can affect change," she told Southern Voice, while stressing her duties in the legislature will be addressing such issues as poverty and education.

Todd was forced into a runoff after a June 6 election with five candidates yielded no winner with more than 50 percent of the vote. Her runoff success also came shortly after Alabama voters altered the state's constitution to ban same-sex marriage.

"This victory is significant because it comes on the heels of the anti-gay marriage amendment passing," said Robin Brand, senior vice president of politics and strategy for the Victory Fund, which endorsed Todd and raised money for her campaign. "This is a huge boost to the Alabama LGBT community."

Brand added that recently, more gay candidates have been willing to step up to the plate and seek office in the South.

"The electorate is more open to supporting openly gay candidates. We're creating a perfect storm," she said. "We're winning in places we didn't even think were possible five years ago."

Okla. primary races July 25

The Victory Fund has also endorsed lesbian Rhonda Rudd for a seat in the Oklahoma Senate and Al McAffrey, who is also gay, for a House seat in Oklahoma. Both are running in the July 25 Democratic primary.

McAffrey is a former police officer and currently works as a funeral director. Rudd is co-chair of the Oklahoma Stonewall Democrats, on the board of the Oklahoma ACLU, a member of the National Lesbian & Gay Law Association, and the founder and president of the Lesbian & Gay Law Student Association at Oklahoma City University.

Oklahoma is currently a state with no openly gay representation in the legislature, Brand said.

Patricia Todd, the first openly gay person elected to the Alabama legislature, said gay voters played a key role in her victory July 18.

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national news

U.S. defends gay rights record to U.N. panel

Officials asked to address 'major gaps' cited in report

By JOSHUA LYNSEN

U.S. officials were asked by a United Nations panel why the government isn't doing more to protect gay citizens from discrimination and abuse, based on a new report that alleges "major gaps" in human rights for gay Americans.

The report, released July 17 by the human rights group Global Rights, represents an unprecedented compilation of allegations from 11 organizations that work on gay rights issues.

"We're calling for the United States government to uphold its commitments to the international human rights standards it helped develop," said Salih Booker, executive director of Global Rights.

Among the areas cited are instances of discrimination in the public and private sector, along with stories of abuse and negligence. No formal charges are levied in the 28-page report, but the government is cited for not enacting hate crime laws to protect gays from being targeted for murder, assault and rape.

The report says the allegations represent "substantive violations" of the International Covenant for Civil & Political Rights, which protects equal rights, freedom of expression and other liberties.

Global Rights spokesperson **Mark Bromley** says a new report delivered to the United Nations concludes the United States isn't doing enough to protect its gay citizens from discrimination and abuse.

Global Rights, Amnesty International, gay groups including the Human Rights Campaign and other report participants ask the U.N. Human Rights Committee to hold the U.S. responsible for these "human rights violations."

The report's release came the same week that U.N. Human Rights Committee members in Geneva questioned U.S. officials about the nation's track record on human rights issues.

Global Rights spokesperson Mark Bromley said the July 17-18 meeting was the first such inquiry into alleged U.S. rights abuses by the U.N. since 1995.

Although the inquiry focused on war-related issues, like the handling of prisoners at Guantanamo Bay, Bromley said the U.S. was forced by one committee member to respond to problems documented in the report on gay issues.

According to partial transcripts of the inquiry, Justice Department spokesperson Wan Kim noted the U.S. maintains a "profound and lasting commitment to equality."

The U.S. delegation's leader, State Department spokesperson Matthew Waxman acknowledged, "There is always more work to be done to safeguard human rights," but he otherwise did not address gay rights issues.

Most gay rights questions came from U.N. committee member Michael O'Flaherty of Ireland. Bromley said O'Flaherty asked U.S. officials to describe their plans to combat employment discrimination, and protect transgender people.

Kim responded that the government "takes all kinds of violence — against all victims — very seriously," no matter who was victimized or "what they look like."

'Major gaps'

The report — titled "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender & Intersex Human Rights in the United States" — alleges several "major gaps" in protections for gay Americans.

It chides the U.S. for failing to enact any "standardized non-discrimination protections based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression."

Also missing in 21 states, including Georgia, and federal code are hate crime statutes that cover real or perceived sexual orientation.

Several "human rights violations" are also alleged in the report.

The military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, which bars open gays from military service, is cited as one such violation. The report classified the policy as "a discriminatory limitation on freedom of expression."

The report says the U.S. is also failing to protect gay and lesbian youth. It describes a "prevalence of verbal, physical, and sexual violence" directed toward these youths.

The report describes many other instances where gays are perceived or treated as second-class citizens.

Angela Clements, an HRC public policy advocate, said the report proves that U.S. officials must do more to protect gays.

The U.N. Human Rights Committee is expected to release its recommendations to the U.S. later this month. Those recommendations carry symbolic weight and are not legally binding.

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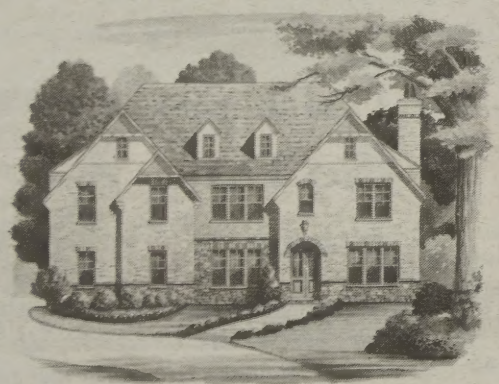

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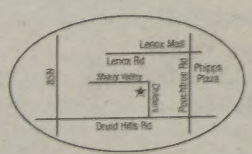

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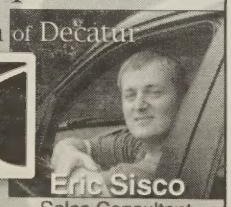
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editorial

Why we're losing gay marriage cases

Either we win marriage in legislatures or we must at least make our court victories stick. Very few judges will rule our way if they know it will jeopardize their own power.

By CHRIS CRAIN

IT'S TRULY THE DOG DAYS of summer in the battle for marriage equality. This month alone, judges in six states — New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Georgia, Nebraska and Tennessee — have ruled against lawsuits brought by gay marriage supporters.

The worst defeat was in New York, where the state's highest court decided it was constitutional to exclude gay couples from marrying because there are rational reasons other than disapproval of gay relationships for doing so.

The justification cited by the court was protecting the welfare of children, who Judge Robert S. Smith said would best be served by a mother and a father. He acknowledged no research support for that conclusion, but argued "intuition" was enough.

Left unanswered by Judge Smith was the excellent question raised in dissent by Chief Judge Judith Kaye: Why exactly would heterosexual couples be less likely to have children in wedlock if homosexual couples were allowed to marry?

"There are enough marriage licenses to go around for everyone," wrote Kaye, answering her own question. "No one rationally decides to have children because gays and lesbians are excluded from marriage."

THE HIGHEST COURT IN MASSACHUSETTS famously ruled the other way on gay marriage a few years back. But even though the Massachusetts Constitution prohibits amendments intended to overturn court opinions, this month that same court said it won't stop an amendment that would do just that, turning back the clock to hetero-only marriage.

In Connecticut, gay couples can't marry but they can, like their not-so-distant neighbors in Vermont, enter into civil unions that include the same rights and benefits, but under a different name and set of laws. This month, a judge there said that was good enough, and ruled against gay couples suing under the simple idea that separate is inherently unequal.

That had to make gay advocates in California nervous, since in oral arguments this month the state defended its exclusion of gays from marriage with the same argument: that the state's domestic partnerships are good enough.

Georgia is a lot more conservative, of course, than New York, Massachusetts or Connecticut. But the state's supreme court has a fairly good gay rights track record. The U.S. Supreme Court upheld Georgia's sodomy law in the infamous decision of Bowers vs. Hardwick, but it was the Georgia Supreme Court that threw the law out — several years before their black-robed colleagues in Washington finally saw the error in their Bowers ways.

This month, however, the Georgia Supreme Court overturned a ruling by a lower court overturning a state constitutional amendment banning gays from marrying, which passed overwhelming as a ballot measure in 2004. The high court decided the amendment did not violate the Georgia Constitution's "single subject rule," even though it not only blocked gay marriage, but civil unions, domestic partnerships and other forms of legal recognition as well.

The scene was much the same in Nebraska and Tennessee, where courts brushed aside efforts to either undo a state amendment that had already passed (Nebraska) or block one from reaching the ballot (Tennessee).

THE MARRIAGE LAWSUITS IN THESE SIX states involve a wide array of legal issues and state constitutional provisions, and they were decided on very different grounds. But they share one common, depressing thread: The good gays lost.

It's only fair to ask why. If, as our advocates keep telling us, we have the better of the arguments on marriage, then what happened to the momentum we had in these lawsuits just a few years ago?

Back then, when the highest courts in Hawaii, Alaska, Vermont and Massachusetts considered the gay marriage question, we won. Have our conservative legal opponents come up with some dynamite new legal arguments that have caught our advocates flatfooted?

The answer is pretty much no. All in all, in the battle of the legal briefs, the arguments are the same and, allowing for the natural tendency to smoke our own dope, the gay couples have by far the stronger case.

No, we aren't losing marriage cases based on the merits. We are losing because the courtroom battle over marriage has been transformed from one about principles like equal protection and fundamental rights, into one about power.

We're taught in civics class that judges apply the law in each case free from the pressures of politics. But of course that's not the case.

Whether they will say so or not, the No. 1 priority for almost all judges is to preserve their own authority. Faced with the choice of doing the right thing or losing that authority, they will find a way to duck the right thing — and the law is replete with ducking opportunities.

The way most judges see it, though they won't ever say it, there is no point to "doing the right thing" if their decision faces a veto from the people in the form of a constitutional amendment. Not only is it pointless to risk prestige and rule one way, only to see it reversed by amendment, but their authority to rule on countless other issues, including other civil rights cases and even gay rights cases, has been irreversibly undermined.

Look at what's happened on marriage. In both Hawaii and Alaska, the supreme courts ruled a decade ago that excluding gays from marriage was unconstitutional. Before the cases could be completed, both court rulings were overturned by constitutional amendments.

In Vermont four years later, the supreme court ruled the same way but cleverly put the issue back in the legislature's hands and telegraphed that they'd likely accept some other institution for gay couples, with a different name but otherwise identical. Civil unions were born.

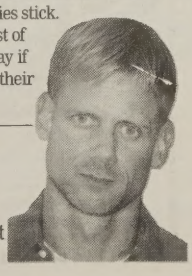
The high court in Massachusetts defied the odds, striking down the marriage laws and later ruling that any institution other than marriage would be inherently unequal. Only an incredibly complex constitutional amendment process there has preserved those rulings from the people's veto, and this month's decision shows even our courageous champions in Boston can be cowed.

Almost half the states have since followed Hawaii and Alaska's lead, adopting constitutional amendments by ballot measure. Gay marriage supporters haven't even come close to stopping one.

In Georgia, after the lower court judge threw out the amendment there, our Republican governor threatened a special legislative session to enact a new amendment unless the Supreme Court expedited review and reversed the ruling. The leading Democrats seeking to unseat him this fall quickly agreed, despite the time and taxpayer expense it would involve.

Looking down the barrel of that political shotgun, is it any wonder the Georgia justices meekly complied, expediting review and unanimously reinstating the amendment?

The lesson is a depressing one but let's at least learn it: Either we win the freedom to marry in the legislatures or we must at least make our court victories stick. Because only the rarest of judges will rule our way if it means jeopardizing their own authority.



@ Chris Crain is executive editor of Southern Voice and can be reached at ccrain@sovo.com.

letters

Not voting treats us like 2nd-class citizens

To the Editors:

Re "Governor's race offers little for gay voters" (news, July 14):

I am dismayed and disappointed in Georgia Equality for leading the charge on a strategy that asked gay Georgians to withhold votes in the gubernatorial race. I strongly believe such a strategy is ill-conceived and misguided.

There is no way to track a lack of votes in a particular race back to gay voters. Besides, it is better to choose the lesser of evils than to forego our right to vote. Withholding our vote in the gubernatorial race only strengthens — literally and in terms of appearances — those who oppose us.

I also firmly believe that this ill-advised strategy is short-sighted; it's simply not a sound part of a long-term game plan. Let's focus on long-term strategy, not dramatic short-term bravado.

While I respect the individuals who signed on to Georgia Equality's no-vote strategy, I feel they failed to lead us effectively on this crucial issue.

There are many ways in which we are still perceived as and treated as second-class citizens. Even so, each LGBTQ person has the right and privilege to vote and they should never let anyone — not even someone from our own community — convince them to sacrifice that.

B. ANDREW PLANT
Atlanta

Marriage debate dishonors sacrifices of soldiers

To the Editors:

Sadness grips my soul as I read about how hatred controls the hearts of so many Americans. How can we stand tall against injustices around the world when we perpetrate inequality right here in our own boarders?

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NOT TO WORRY! — WHY, WE'RE DOZENS OF MILES FROM THE FIGHTING!
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To most people around the world, the red, white and blue is a symbol for freedom, but it is hard for me to espouse our greatness when I hear bigotry and hatred spread from the pulpits of our most revered leaders —including our governor in Georgia and the president of the United States.

No matter your background or station in society, ambitions or political affiliations, we must stop those who call themselves leaders or clergy when what dribbles from their lips is filth, vile and hatred. Tell our leaders we expect them to bring us back to a place where we can sing with honor of our freedoms, privileges and legacies.

I cannot believe we are wasting so much time fighting each other over basic human rights when our sons and daughters, husbands and wives are dying in a fight for those very freedoms. We dishonor their sacrifice by debating whether to restrict those liberties from our own citizens.

TODD M. DOBSON
Lawrenceville, Ga.

Straight people should want gays to marry

To the Editors:

It ought to make the "family values" crowd happy that gays want to get married and settle down into committed, monogamous, loving relationships.

If gay people were allowed to marry each other, they would not be so pressured into marrying a person of the opposite sex merely to conform to what society expects.

Do they really want a gay person to marry their heterosexual child or grandchild? Wouldn't it be better to encourage gay people marry each other instead?

Is it fair that 30-year gay and lesbian relationships receive less protection than those of heterosexuals who meet in the morning and marry by sundown? A gay couple that has lived in the same home for decades, cared for each other through illnesses, comforted each other after the loss of loved ones and shared their entire lives together is denied the rights and protections that strangers who decide to marry on a whim in Las Vegas receive.

Without marriage, gay couples have tried to establish their rights privately, through contracts. For about $1,000, lawyers provide couples with a will, health care proxy, statement granting each partner durable power of attorney if the other is disabled, and a contract to govern disposition of commonly held property.

But such agreements aren't always upheld in courts, and they are like a fig leaf compared to the broad legal cloak of marriage.

Marriage is not a "special right." The freedom to marry is so basic to happiness that polls have shown that Americans value a happy marriage, even above money, as most important to their sense of personal worth and fulfillment.

As we mature, we all want to connect with something bigger than ourselves — to love someone, follow all the threads of each other's lives, and be legally recognized as family.

Society has a compelling interest in encouraging stable, monogamous relationships between adults, straight and gay. People who are married buy houses and save money. They are good neighbors, they share responsibility for their spouses.

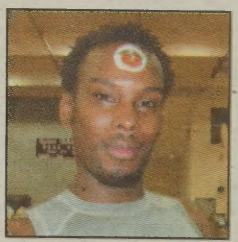
There are health benefits to monogamy, especially important in this age of AIDS. Finally, the sheer joy and comfort of having that publicly acknowledged close relationship makes for a happier person, and happy people cause less grief to others.

RANDALL RAMOS
East Moline, Ill.

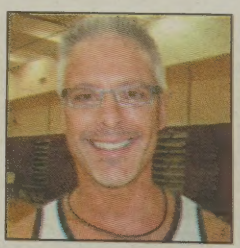
THE Q

Which gubernatorial candidate did you vote for in the primary?

Cathy Cox. As a woman, she'll represent us in many ways. I don't like the fact that she flip-flopped on gay marriage issues, but by doing so she'll have more approval from conservatives at the capitol and have more bipartisan support.
Rhonda Winston, 27



Cathy Cox, because I like her last name. I don't really get into politics that much, but I thought a woman would be a better candidate.
Tommy Thomas, 25



I did not vote for a candidate for governor because of the candidates' stands on gay issues. I had also heard it suggested that gay voters not vote in that category for that reason.
George Michaels, 47

I voted for Cathy Cox. She was the better of the two candidates. I was going to leave my vote blank, but I didn't want someone else to vote the other way without my vote to balance it. I know she's going to come around with gay issues.
Stacey Oliger, 31

I switched over and voted Republican against Ralph Reed. I'm a native Georgian, so I can say that most Georgians are morons when voting, and I know he could get elected.
Chris Slade, 42

Gay voters were surveyed leaving the polls at Grady High School in Midtown.

Compiled by **BO SHELL**

viewpoint CHRISTIE AYOTTE

We finally were aggressive, we finally said '**enough being used**,' and we tolerated diversity in our ranks.

Don't mess with gay voters

I WISHED I FELT VINDICATED BY Cathy Cox's concession speech shortly after midnight on Election Night. I wanted to feel hard and bad and snarl, "See, I told you — don't stab gay people in the back, we will take your ass down." Then I wanted to make gang signs.

You see, I would love to be part of a gang called the 'Bitter Queens and Angry Lesbians.' Unfortunately, I think we would spend most of our time arguing over what our gang sign should be. But I digress.

By all empirical standards, gay voters were responsible for Cox's loss in the Democratic gubernatorial primary: With half of us skipping the top of the ticket completely and the other half voting in the Republican primary, there just weren't enough ballots left in the voting universe for Cox.

Further, the reason there weren't enough votes for Cox was directly attributable to one serious misstep: her last minute betrayal of gay constituents by endorsing a possible special legislative session on the gay marriage amendment, and her subsequent gratuitous statement opposing civil unions.

Both served as a horrific affront to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender voters who had identified her early as a clear favorite, but perhaps more importantly, signaled to other groups that Cox did not have the political seasoning needed to stand by her principles. After all, if Cox was so quick to trade in gay people, who would she trade in next?

GAY VOTERS WENT 5-0 IN TUESDAY'S vote: Cox's punishing defeat; the surprise early concession of anti-gay Ralph Reed in the GOP race for lieutenant governor; gay rights ally Jim Martin leading the Democratic run-off for lieutenant governor; gay state Rep. Karla Drenner's re-election and gay lobbyist Allen Thornell making it to the run-off for House District 58.

Maybe we even went 7-0 if you throw in wins by longtime gay rights supporters Nan Orrock, who will move up from the state House to the state Senate, and Kathy Ashe, who was easily re-elected to her House seat.

But despite all of these wins, I still did not feel even a little bit self-righteous on Tuesday night. I just felt disappointed all over again. Because in spite of her political naïveté and backstabbing tactics, I still wanted a woman to be governor, and I still thought Cathy Cox would have done the best job of the three candidates.

In the light of Wednesday morning, however, as I listened to the news of Reed's sound defeat echo nationally, I was reminded that everything we do has consequences that travel beyond our personal spheres of influence.

It occurred to me that the reason gay Georgians benefited all around on Election Night is because we finally were aggressive, we finally said "enough being used," and we tolerated diversity in our ranks and let people do what they personally felt empowered to do.

THIS IS A MARKED SIGN OF GROWTH for Georgia's LGBT community. In the beginning stages of our political involvement, we all looked to one small group of people to simply tell us who to vote for and, frankly, to do all the heavy lifting and pay the bills. The news on Tuesday was different — we each have a ballot, and we used it to advance our cause across the waterfront.

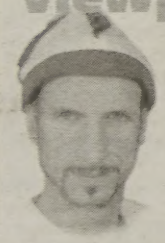
Similarly, we have always known that we have gay Republicans and gay Democrats. What Election Night proved is that gay Republicans and gay Democrats willing to vote independently can do a lot. If we are going to be effective in Georgia, we can be "party affiliated," but we must be demanding voters whatever party label we wear — or don't.

Now gay voters find ourselves in the best of all possible positions going into the Aug. 8 run-off. We have a large block of Democratic voters available to go help Martin win the Democratic nomination for lieutenant governor; a large block of Republican voters available to knock virulently anti-gay state Sen. Bill Stephens off of the Secretary of State ticket on the GOP side; and all of us free to give up at least one Saturday to go phone bank or canvass for Allen Thornell.

It's enough to make me want to do gang signs.

Christie Ayotte is a paralegal and lives in Atlanta. She can be reached at cayotte@smith.alumnae.net.

viewpoint CHRISTOPHER STEVENS



Recreational sex always seems like such a fun idea, but lately it feels more **banal than anal**.

Lie down with dogs...

OH BLESSED, BLESSED RELIEF! IT HAD been too long — months too long. So long that I hardly noticed that I was missing anything, until I got it, and then, as I think I said, oh the relief!

But there just never seemed to be that combination of time and availability, you know? Until suddenly it dawned on me that the situation had become well nigh life-threatening, an absolute danger to myself and others, and that something had to be done.

So last weekend, I took myself firmly in hand, and went out and got what I'd needed for so long. And instantly the world was a brighter place, and I could see clearly, without all that filth distracting me from my true course.

Never go six months with worn out windshield wiper blades.

And you thought I was talking about that sex I had later the same weekend, didn't you?

One does tend to see things more clearly after sex. It's just that, with the wiper blades, that's a good thing, whereas with sex it's often not. (How much regret might we save ourselves simply by waiting for last call, when the lights come up, before dragging whatever-it-is home?)

The reward and beautiful clarity of the wiper blades tends to last longer, too — sometimes for a couple of years. With sex, we often forget within a matter of days how little rewarding it turns out to be, as our minds are filmed over again with need or desire or whatever that stuff is that sends me careening into some rut I ought to have avoided like the plague.

OF COURSE, I ALREADY HAVE THE plague, but there's always something new. But the day after I got my new wipers, I drove (behind my blissfully clean windshield) to the apartment (which could have learned something from my windshield) of a new online acquaintance, and do you know what he sent me home with as a parting gift? (Take a few seconds. You'll never guess.)

Fleas.

Or at least about a gazillion bites. I pity the guy's poor cats. I haven't actually seen any fleas around my place, but I'm going to bomb the apartment just in case.

This would just be another sadly funny story if the occasion itself had been more rewarding. Certainly many things that I wanted done were done, and I certainly enjoyed them up to a point.

But after a while, I found that I was concentrating much more on the very inventive endless re-mix of Billy Idol's "White Wedding" that I was composing in my head.

I have this feeling more and more with recreational sex. It always seems like such a fun idea, but before it's even over, it feels more banal than anal, and I'm thinking of a whole raft of more important things I could be doing, like stopping global warming or ending world hunger or repotting the spider plant.

IS IT JUST ME, OR HAS SEX CHANGED? Back when it would have been illegal for me to have sex, there was that feeling that sex was "just nature's way of saying 'Howdy!'"

But back then, the worst you could get from saying "Howdy" was the clap or a case of crabs, before sex became less like a sweet and harmless Hallmark card and more like a Rorschach test, an IQ exam and Russian Roulette all rolled up into one.

The whole thing comes freighted now with so many requirements and limitations that it's more like catalogue shopping than an erotic adventure, and the pursuit feels less like a friendly game than a desperate compulsion.

Maybe in my younger days, it was such a relief to make contact with another gay person, that there was an instant, if fleeting, sense of friendship to sex — like the squeegee at the gas station, before I got my new wiper blades.

It's horrible that increased social acceptance and vast online "communities" might have made what was once rare and special too available. So instead of enjoying variety, we keep shooting people down in favor of that "perfect" thing that's bound to turn up next.

This is, of course, so crystal clear to me now, with my post-orgasmic ennui, and ankles covered with itchy welts — at least until my view of the sexual world is clouded over again with smudgy visions of hot fun.

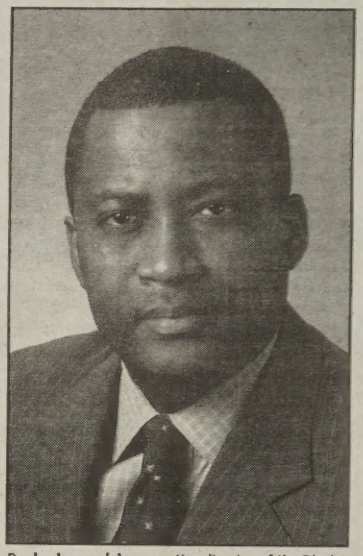
Christopher Stevens is an Atlanta-based writer and designer and can be reached at boyohboy@mindspring.com.

action! alert

Ballot box battle

Black leaders seek gay support to reauthorize Voting Rights Act

By ELIZABETH A. PERRY



Dr. **Joe Leonard Jr.**, executive director of the Black Leadership Forum, says it is important for all people to care about the Voting Rights Act because everyone is impacted by it.

A BLACK GAY GROUP IS URGING GAY support for reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act now before Congress, citing common interests between racial minorities and gays in the fight for civil rights.

H. Alexander Robinson, director of the National Black Justice Coalition, said the gains of the African-American civil rights movement have benefited gays, and now it is time to return the favor.

"It is a travesty that the GLBT movement has not been more engaged on this issue," said Robinson. "The same forces that would speak up against full freedom in the workplace and marriage equality are the same people, the same institutions who are challenging the need for the Voting Rights Act and its enforcement."

The NBJC is working with the Black Leadership Forum in the push for reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act, set to expire in 2007. The act was originally written in 1965 to enforce fair voting practices for black voters and other racial and ethnic minorities in all states.

Dr. Joe Leonard Jr., executive director of the Black Leadership Forum, said all people should support reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act because everyone is impacted by it.

"Prior to the Voting Rights Act of 1965, there was not a single female senator or congressperson of African-American descent," he said.

Today's congressional demographics reflect a record number of women and minorities in political office, according Library of Congress figures. A total of 84 women, 43 African Americans, 29 Hispanic Americans and 8 Asian Pacific Americans are serving in the House and Senate.

Of these totals, there are 69 women in the House and 14 in the Senate. There are 42 African Americans in the House and Barack Obama, a Democrat, is the only African American in the Senate.

There are three openly gay members of Congress, all in the House.

A vote in the House on reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act was put off for three weeks after Southern Republicans voiced concern over certain provisions. Nearly 80 Republicans signed a letter protesting the provision that requires multilingual ballots and monitoring of elections in Southern states.

The House reconvened for a vote on the measure on July 13, with a 390-33 majority vote in favor of reauthorization. The matter will go to the Senate, where a vote is expected by the end of the month. Republican leadership in both houses of Congress favors reauthorization.

"The Voting Rights Act is one of the most successful pieces of legislation we have ever had," Robinson said. "It is through the Voting Rights Act and its enforcement that we have broken down barriers and realized the rights of African Americans and other racial minorities."

The Human Rights Campaign has joined in the effort, writing members of Congress to ask for their support for reauthorization. The National Gay & Lesbian Task Force has not worked on the VRA reauthorization, although both the Task Force and HRC are members of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, a broad-based coalition of civil rights groups active in the Voting Rights Act.

ACTION! INFO

National Black Justice Coalition
1725 I St., NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20006
202-349-3755
www.nbjc.org

Black Leadership Forum
910 17th St. NW, Suite 317
Washington, DC 20006
202-689-1965
www.blackleadershipforum.org

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eclipse

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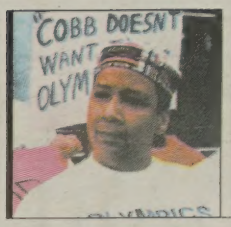

Herstory

Pat Hussain joins lesbian history panel to recount Cobb County Olympics fight

Page 37

Bravo, Bravo

'Work Out' just the latest show to prove there's a better 'gay network' than Logo

Lesbian trainer **Jackie Warner** (left) gets some instruction on form from **Jesse**, one of the gay trainers who works for her on 'Work Out,' the newest gay-inclusive reality show on Bravo. (Photo by Michael Yarish)

FOR THE PAST decade, gay television shows have grown increasingly common. It started on network television and quickly shifted to premium cable channels like HBO and Showtime.

Now with gay shows like NBC's "Will & Grace" and Showtime's "Queer As Folk" gone, who knows where to go? The obvious choice would be to click over to Logo, the MTV-owned all-gay-all-the-time digital cable channel launched about a year ago.

But Logo hasn't made as big an impact on gay culture as arguably the queerest channel on the airwaves, Bravo.

Over the past few years, arts and entertainment network Bravo positioned itself as not only the gayest channel around, but one with programming that connects on multiple levels with various aspects of gay life.

Of course, the most obvious example is the once-ubiquitous "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy." But Bravo took that gay ball and ran with it. On top of their already formidable slate of gay syndicated movies, Bravo fans got "Showbiz Moms and Dads" by gay documentary company Worlds of Wonders, "Kathy Griffin: My Life on the D List" featuring a slew of gays surrounding the comedian, "Manhunt" with its gay eye candy posing as a modeling competition, and even "Celebrity Poker Showdown" which featured gay entertainers and gay favorites around the table.

None of those shows top the gay jewel in Bravo's tiara: "Project Runway." It started out as a dud, but this fashion competition became a huge hit with gay people interested in the show's two Ds: design and drama. The high quotient of gay contestants and judges didn't hurt either.

Just say the word "Runway" in a gay bar to spark speculation about the potential winner by complete strangers. The second-season finale was the highest rated show ever on Bravo; the third season premiere July 12 clocked 2.4 million viewers, the highest-rated season premiere in the channel's history.

And the future looks good and gay for Bravo's continued success. On July 19, it rolled out "Work Out," a show about a hot lesbian gym owner in L.A. with lovely gay male employees.

What better way to snag both gay men and lesbians than a show about a fabulous lady in a gym?

Making us sweat

THERE IS MORE THAN A PASSING resemblance between "Work Out" and "Blow Out," Bravo's hit reality show set in a hair salon. They're both based on successful businesses that cater to the rich and fabulous in Los Angeles. They both feature beautiful people becoming more beautiful, and they both feature a successful, charismatic and attractive business owner.

But Jackie Warner, the lesbian owner of Sky Sport & Spa, is nothing like Jonathan Antin, the owner of Jonathan salon. Whereas Antin is the slightly psychotic and totally narcissistic center of the universe on "Blow Out," Warner seems to be the only sane person in a universe of crazies on "Work Out."

So, how does Warner keep her cool amid petulant trainers and her moody girlfriend?

"I have a lot of patience, that's for sure," Warner says. "My girlfriend drives me insane; I think I allow things to occur that I shouldn't tolerate; or I just walk away from situations that annoy me."

LIFE IN THE GYM IS CERTAINLY interesting thanks to the cast, which includes aggressive Brian, flirty Rebecca (who was also a contestant on CBS' "Amazing Race"), eager-to-please gay trainer Jesse and Warner's girlfriend Mimi, a Brazilian personal trainer at another gym who is moody, jealous and overprotective.

There are also always celebrities on hand, including dance diva Jody Watley, who trains with the show's third gay trainer, Doug.

It certainly doesn't hurt the show's chances that everyone is attractive and physically fit — including Warner, 37, who looks and sounds like Scarlett Johansson's buff older sister.

"A lot of guys don't really get the concept, that if you're a lesbian, you're a lesbian," says Warner of clients who get romantic notions. "Any place you go, men are not going to believe that a woman doesn't really want a man, and it gets frustrating."

Warner says she doesn't understand why, contrary to mainstream society, gay men are very body conscious and lesbians aren't.

"Gay men are like these Adonises — it's so extremist — and the women allow themselves to gain weight and not take care of themselves," she says. "I think it's a way to rebel against a patriarchal society."

But the trend is changing, Warner says.

"I've noticed in L.A. that younger lesbians have a different look than the lesbians when I was young," she says. "They are taking care of themselves, and they're more athletic, and they care more about their outward appearance."

For viewers who aren't tuning in for the hot bodies, relationship drama or sweaty celebs, just pick up a workout tip or two from Warner and her crew.

"I think the biggest thing a good trainer has to do is definitely not deprive people of things," says Warner, adding that the most common mistake she sees is clients not eating enough.

The gay divide

SO WHY HASN'T LOGO BEEN ABLE to make an impact on the gay universe quite like Bravo has with "Runway," "Work Out" and all their reality show and movie siblings?

Part of the reason may be that Logo still feels like MTV's younger gay brother who just came out of the closet. There's lots of music videos, concerts and movies amid the original programming. It's signature scripted series "Noah's Arc," returns for its second season on Aug. 9.

Like Bravo, most of the programming on Logo is of the reality variety, including "Coming Out Stories," "Can't Get a Date" and "U.S. of ANT."

But unlike Bravo, Logo is all about being gay.

That definitely holds appeal for people recently out of the closet or who don't live where outlets for being gay are easily accessible. But people who have been to more than three Gay Prides don't need to wrap themselves in a rainbow flag.

The difference between Bravo and Logo is like the difference between Details and Out magazines, or "Xena" and "The L Word":

One integrates sexual orientation as a part of a cultural identity; the other celebrates orientation as the whole identity. As gays move ever more into the cultural fabric, integration may ultimately offer more appeal.

MORE INFO

'Work Out'
Tuesdays, 9 p.m.
Bravo

KID STUFF: Alex Wan brings the magic of Toy Party to summer with backpacks for students as your ticket to fun. **Page 28**

BOOK NOOK: Gay and lesbian bookstores answer the perennial question: What are you reading? **Page 33**

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TUESDAY JULY 25 **-SUNDAY** JULY 30

'Mamma Mia,' here it comes again! The Abba-based musical returns with another shot to catch the music you love and a story-line to leave you laughing. Fox Theatre, 660 Peachtree St., 404-881-2100, www.foxtheatre.org (Photo by Joan Marcus)

SUNDAY JULY 23

The annual Atlanta Cotillion fundraising season for AID Atlanta is already underway with parties leading up to the big drag ball. As part of her effort, debutante Ms. Lola (Juan Pablo Zuluaga) throws a **pool party fundraiser** from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. at Peachtree Lofts, 850 Peachtree St., www.atlantacotillion.com

MONDAY JULY 24 -SUNDAY JULY 30

Downtown Atlanta Restaurant Week returns to city restaurants, offering set-price, multi-course meals at a number of fine and casual dining locations, including the new concept restaurant **BED**. http://www.atlanta-downtown.com/HavingFun_RestaurantWeek.asp

MONDAY JULY 24

Grab an application online and check out YouthPride's **new volunteer orientation** to learn more about how you can help Atlanta's gay youth organization. 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at YouthPride, 1017 Edgewood Ave. 404-521-9711 x. 201, www.youthpride.org

TUESDAY JULY 25

The 'Out at the Library' series on gay and lesbian history presents a screening of the biopic **'Wilde,'** staring **Stephen Fry** (left) and **Jude Law**. 7 p.m. at the Central Library, 1 Margaret Mitchell Square. 404-730-1700, www.afplweb.com

The Big Gay Supper Club monthly dining event heads to BED, where eating, not sleeping, takes place between the sheets. Reservations required. 7 p.m. at BED, 110 Marietta St., www.biggaysupperclub.com

THURSDAY JULY 27

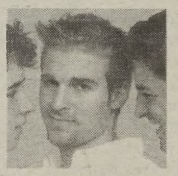
The **Atlanta Gay Men's Chorus Luau Benefit** features an all-you-can-eat buffet and a cocktail for $20. 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. at Einstein's, 691 14th St. 404-320-1030, www.agmchorus.org

The **Art Amok! Slam Poetry Team** performs as the first all-lesbian troupe to be selected for the open competition at the National Poetry Slam in Austin, Texas. 8 p.m. at Bound to Be Read Books, 481-B Flat Shoals Ave. 404-522-0877, www.boundtobereadbooks.com

ON THE WEB: For other calendars of special events, visit **www.sovo.com**.

FRIDAY JULY 28

The Atlanta Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce hosts its Fourth Friday networking event with **gallery night**, featuring an art opening and sushi from Wasabi restaurant. 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at Romo Gallery, 309 Peters St. 404-2522-9955, www.atlantagaychamber.org



Based on the hit gay comic strip about an administrative assistant looking for love in all the wrong places, the film version of **'The Mostly Unfabulous Social Life of Ethan Green,'** premiers in Atlanta. Landmark Midtown Arts Cinema, 931 Monroe Drive. 678-495-1424, www.landmarktheatres.com

SATURDAY JULY 29

Halo Lounge celebrates its **fifth anniversary** in style with Turntables on the Hudson: DJs Nickodemus, Mariano and Nappy G from New York along with Halo's resident spinmeisters. 8 p.m. to 3 a.m. at Halo Lounge, 817 W. Peachtree St. 404-325-3061, www.halolounge.com

National DJ/Producer **Joe Bermudez** throws down the beats at Atlanta's weekly Submerge Party. 10 p.m. at WETbar, 960 Spring St. 404-745-9494, www.wetbaratlanta.com

SATURDAY JULY 29 & SUNDAY JULY 30

Heralded bohemian poet **Edward Field** makes two stops in Atlanta — during 'Out at the Library,' then at Atlanta's gay and lesbian bookstore — to discuss his new memoir 'The Man Who Would Marry Susan Sontag: And Other Intimate Literary Portraits of the Bohemian Era.' Saturday, July 29, 7:30 p.m. at 960 Ponce de Leon Ave. 404-885-7820. Sunday, July 30, 11 a.m. at Outwrite Bookstore& Coffeehouse, 991 Piedmont Ave. 404-607-0082, www.outwritebooks.com

To add a listing, e-mail calendar@sovo.com, call 404-876-1819, ext. 20, or fax to 404-876-2709, attn: Bo Shell. Entries should be submitted at least 14 days in advance.

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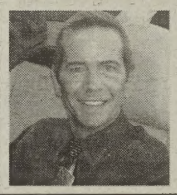

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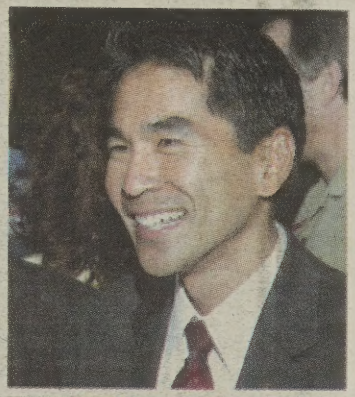
Backpack benefit

Toy Party planners expand and gear up for back-to-school giving and family focus



Alex Wan, president of For the Kid in All of Us, which hosts the annual Toy Party, says the group's new back-to-school event is a natural extension of the successful Christmastime benefit.

AFTER FOR THE KID IN ALL OF US hosted its first Toy Party in 2003 to raise toys for needy children at Christmastime, board members became interested in hosting a summer benefit for kids in need of school supplies.

This year, the gay-led and heavily gay-attended non-profit events, spearheaded by board president and community activist Alex Wan, kick off those plans with Backpack in the Park on July 30.

Admission to the hosted bar and picnic event at Magnolia Hall in Piedmont Park is a backpack stuffed with school supplies.

"We really recognize the support from the community with children's causes, and we wanted to continue to extend that success for an event in the summer," Wan says.

Making a point to have a more family-friendly event, For the Kid in All of Us decided on a daytime picnic with activities for the whole family.

The adults enjoy an open bar and food provided by Einstein's, Joe's on Juniper, Cowtippers and the Georgia Beverage Company, and kids have their own fun with children's activities, including an inflatable playhouse and a bungee trampoline.

For kids of all ages, a dunking booth is on hand with Wan, board member Ken Britt and gay PR guru Harrison Perry as ready targets for attendees who purchase a chance to dunk them for a good cause.

"We wanted something to have a lot more family feel to it," Wan says. "We've extended the invitation to the parents in our community that have kids who may not regularly attend the Toy Party."

AFTER SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS in the past, For the Kid in All of Us chose the MEGA Family Project as one of its two event partners.

"We're excited to be giving back to the community and for our kids to be participating as well," says Kathy Kelly, MEGA executive director. "For some kids, it's the first time they've participated in giving back to other kids, so we're trying to help them learn the valuable lesson of taking care of others in the community."

Nicole Brownlee, Director of External Affairs for Atlanta Public Schools, a beneficiary along with Tobie Grant Manor, the housing authority of DeKalb County, says help for needy students is always welcome.

"We know a lot of our students wouldn't have the resources at their disposal to have these backpacks otherwise," Brownlee says. "We appreciate any opportunity to be supported by the community."

Brownlee says schools provide resources for students in need, and without community support, schools must dig into their own pockets to provide supplies for students who can't afford them.

WITH MEGA'S 3,500-MEMBER DATABASE, the support of event partner St. Mark United Methodist Church, and For The Kid in All of Us, Wan jokes about sleepless nights figuring out how many participants to plan for, and how much they'll be able to donate.

Wan says he's prepared for 750 participants, but isn't sure how many will actually attend. He says he hopes to have as many or more backpacks as attendees.

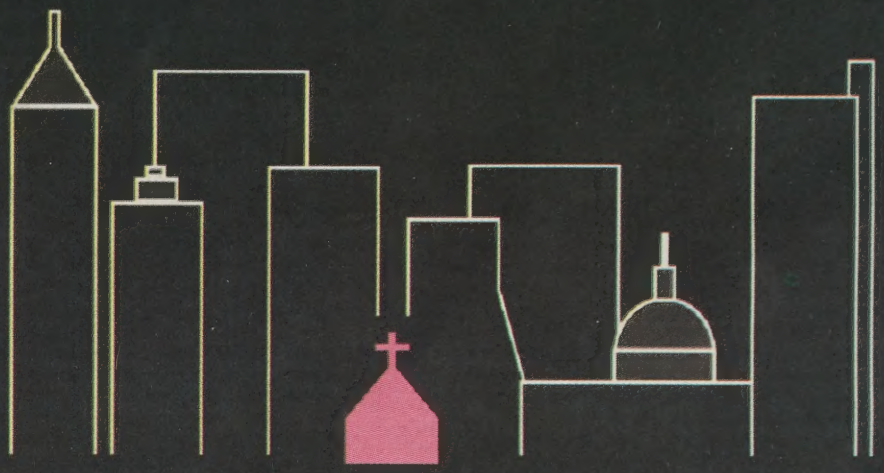
Last year's Toy Party raised about $100,000 and nearly 3,000 toys and gift cards for its beneficiaries. In total, Toy Parties dating back to 2003 raised about $173,000 and 8,300 toys.

"The key message is this is a very casual event where we really want people to come by the park and have a good time," Wan says. "We're hoping to build the same tradition with this event that we have with the Toy Party."

MORE INFO

Backpack in the Park
July 30, 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.
Magnolia Hall
Piedmont Park
www.forthekid.org

New Covenant
Church of Atlanta



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Dancing queen

The songs of Abba return in 'Mamma Mia!' with lead gay cast member and tons of fun

ALONG WITH PERENNIAL BROADWAY favorites like "Cats" and "Annie," "Mamma Mia!" is becoming one of the musicals that Atlanta can expect to see every few seasons. A smash that hit Broadway a mere five years ago, the musical set to the songs of '70s supergroup Abba makes its third visit to the city next week.

On a Greek island, 20-year-old Sophie sets out to find out who her father is as she prepares for her wedding. She invites back three men who visited the island nine months or so before she was born. Any of the three could have impregnated her mother, a former rock star named Donna.

Donna, who now works at a tavern, does not know about Sophie's plan and is surprised by the three men who appear the day of the wedding.

The Abba music not only appeals to a large gay audience, but the show also features prominent gay content in its second act.

ROBERT PENDILLA IS ONE OF "MAMMA Mia's" major cast members. He plays Pepper, one of the men who might be Sophie's father.

"I love playing Pepper," Pendilla says. "He is such a great role. He is the character that people are leery of."

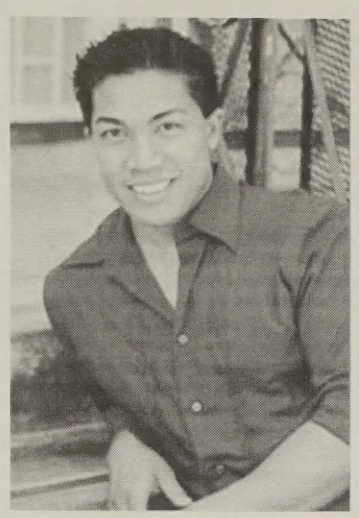
The gay actor attributes the success of the musical — still running strong in New York as well as on tour — to the fact that people like to escape from reality and have a good time.

"They like to put it all behind them and come out and sing along," he says.

Oh, and the music helps too, he laughs.

"Who doesn't love Abba?" he asks. "Abba's music has stood the test of time. It's as much fun to listen to them now as it was back then. 'Mamma Mia' can be really campy too. Who can't enjoy seeing Donna and her former bandmates do a version of 'Dancing Queen?'"

Pendilla says the biggest applause he hears is for the well-known numbers — "Dancing Queen," "Waterloo" and of course the titular song. Diehard Abba fans, of course, know a lot more than those three, he says.



Gay thespian **Robert Pendilla** plays Pepper in the touring production of the smash hit musical 'Mamma Mia!'

The fun of "Mamma Mia!" is seeing how writer Catherine Johnson incorporates the musical numbers into the plot. Pendilla admits it can take new audiences a while to get the hang of it.

"For people who do not know what to expect, it takes them a little bit of time to get into what's happening with the songs," he says. "But soon, they are into it. People who do know what to expect come back and enjoy it again and again."

Pendilla recalls listening to Abba when he was a kid in Los Angeles, so it's now ironic that he gets to perform their songs on a nightly basis. He is involved with a lot of the group numbers, but his major song is "Does Your Mother Know?," another tune he says some audiences have forgotten about.

PENDILLA WAS PREVIOUSLY INVOLVED in a number of stage productions including "Aida," "Mame," Disney's "Aladdin" and "My Fair Lady," as well as a lot of music videos.

Originally produced in London in 1999, the American tour of "Mamma Mia!" began shortly after the show's Broadway run. Pendilla claims that the tour is plugging along and shows no sign of stopping.

He is booked with the show for a few more years and admits he would not mind staying on.

"I will look at what is next when that time comes but for now it's a dream job," he says.

MORE INFO

'Mamma Mia!'
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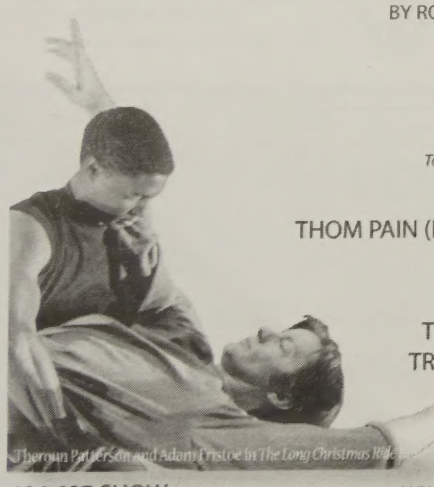

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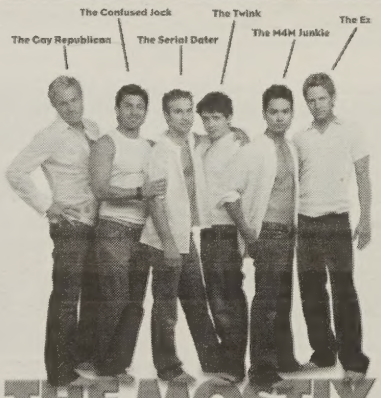

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top 10s

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Next week: DVDs

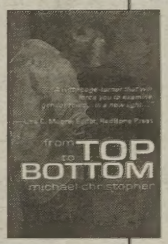
Atlanta Best Sellers: July 2006

WOMEN'S BOOKS

1. **Tipping the Velvet** by Sarah Waters
2. **A Taste of Sin** by Fiona Zedde
3. **Lesbian Sex 101** by Jude Schell
4. **Same Sex in the City** by Lauren Blitzer
5. **Lesbian Kama Sutra** by Kat Harding
6. **Lighthousekeeping** by Jeanette Winterson
7. **Glamour Girls** by Rachel Kramer Bussel
8. **The L Word: Welcome to Our Planet** by Kera Bolonik
9. **Walk Like a Man** by Laurinda Brown
10. **Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic** by Alison Bechdel

MEN'S BOOKS

1. **From Top to Bottom** by Michael-Christopher
2. **Full Circle** by Michael Thomas Ford
3. **Grief** by Andrew Holleran
4. **I Say a Little Prayer** by E. Lynn Harris
5. **My Undoing** by Aiden Shaw
6. **Mother of Sorrows** by Richard McCann
7. **Alone in the Trenches** by Esera Tuaolo
8. **My Lives** by Edmund White
9. **Going Down in La-La Land** by Andy Zeffer
10. **Magical Thinking** by Augusten Burroughs



GENERAL INTEREST

1. **Possible Side Effects** by Augusten Burroughs
2. **What the Bible Really Says About Homosexuality** by Daniel A. Helminiak
3. **One Mississippi** by Mark Childress
4. **Dispatches from the Edge** by Anderson Cooper
5. **Can't Wait to Get to Heaven** by Fannie Flagg
6. **The Devil Wears Prada** by Lauren Weisberger
7. **Darkside Zodiac** by Stella Hyde
8. **Bless Your Heart, Tramp** by Celia Rivenbark
9. **What God Wants** by Neale Donald Walsch
10. **Magical Thinking** by Augusten Burroughs

Gaydarradio.com's Listener's Choice Top 10

1. **Move in My Direction** > Bananarama
2. **NJoi** Anthem
3. **I Can't Get Enough** Fireflies
4. **High Energy** Evelyn Thomas
5. **Crazy Chick** Charlotte Church
6. **Freed from Desire** Gala
7. **Ride a White Horse** Wonderland Avenue
8. **Be My Friend** Scape
9. **The Beat Goes On** Bob Sinclair
10. **Dreaming at the RollerDisco** ATFC

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Radio with a Twist • Big Gay 5

1. **Promiscuous** Nelly Furtado feat. Timbaland
2. **Ain't No Other Man** Christina Aguilera
3. **Unfaithful** Rihanna
4. **Get Together** > Madonna
5. **Hips Don't Lie** Shakira

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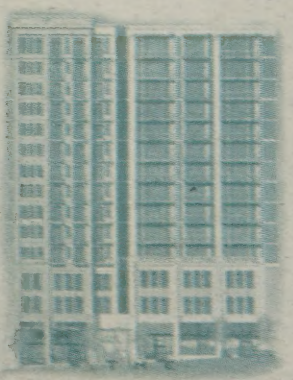

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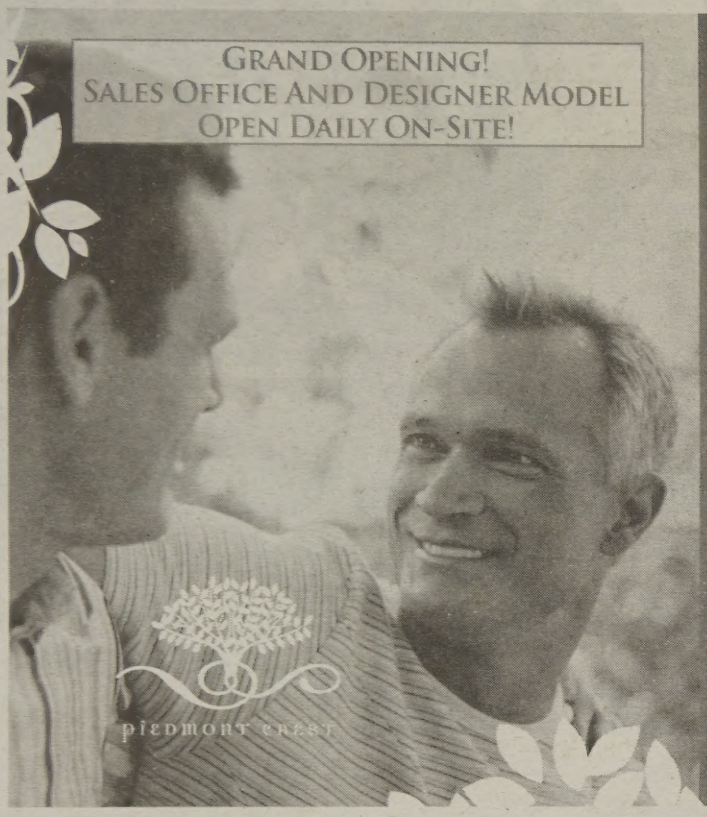

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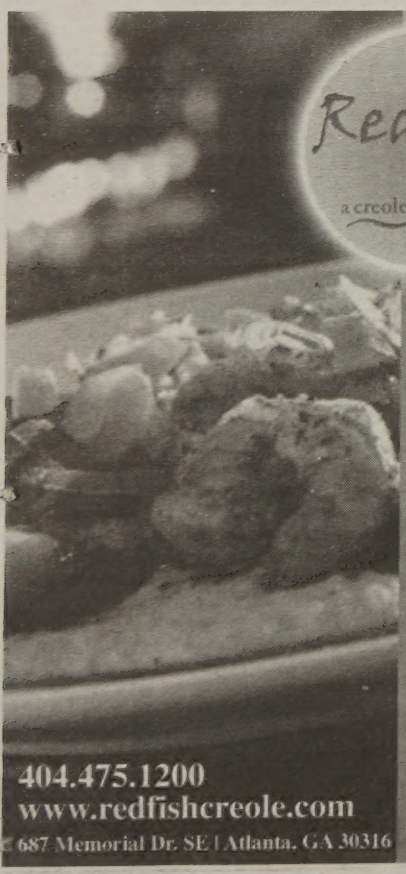

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cover story

Wrestler aims for comeback after coming out

WRESTLER, continued from Page 1

loved me really loved me, or even if they knew who I was."

Klucsarits, 36, is currently living in Atlanta and in counseling.

His path as a wrestler began with a fascination with the sport, or sports-entertainment as it is also known, at age six. By age 12, the boy from Queens, N.Y., committed to become a star like his idols Hulk Hogan, Bob Backlund and Ric Flair.

Klucsarits studied physical therapy in college to get his foot in the door of the industry. In 1992, he traveled as a physical therapist — a lucrative career earning about $70,000 annually.

In 1995, he gave it all up to wrestle for $40 a night on the independent circuit in Memphis.

"It was the best time of my life," Klucsarits says. "I knew I made the right decision, and I knew I was on the right road to making my dream come true."

Just three months after starting, he signed a six-figure contract with the Atlanta-based professional wrestling organization WCW. From there, his career skyrocketed.

As a pro, he earned a Tag Team Championship Belt with WCW. When the bigger WWF bought WCW, Klucsarits snagged the United States Heavy Weight Championship Belt and won a second Tag Team Championship Belt.

Now back in Atlanta where his wrestling career took off in the WCW, **Chris 'Kanyon' Klucsarits** plots his return to professional wrestling. (Photo by Bo Shell)

Trying times

But as his star rose, so did his anxiety. Positive he was gay at age 11, Klucsarits lived a fearful life in the closet that led him down a path of depression. At one point, he suffered so badly that he says he was bedridden six days a week.

On Sept. 14, 2003, after moving to a beach home in Clearwater, Fla., the wrestler took 50 sleeping pills. He says he woke up three hours later, vomited the toxic dosage and immediately started psychological therapy, in which he was diagnosed as bipolar.

During recovery from two serious injuries in 2001, Klucsarits talked to several wrestlers, friends and supporters who backed him on possibly coming out while at WWE.

Toward the end of his time with WWE, hints about "Kanyon's" sexual orientation ran rampant in storylines in the ring. Klucsarits says he was asked by WWE President Vince McMahon to accentuate a slight lisp for his post-injury debut.

He says he was told to come out of a box —or "closet" — in the ring dressed as Boy George and singing "Do You Really Want to Hurt Me," then take a beating from "The Undertaker." The match resulted in Klucsarits' most severe concussion by way of folding chair to the head.

Shortly after the incident in February 2004, Klucsarits says he was fired. He says his dismissal may not have been caused by rumors of his homosexuality, but he thinks it might have played a role.

"I think Vince heard [about my sexual orientation] and wasn't happy with it," Klucsarits says. "I took [dressing as Boy George] as a message, and few months after that, he fired me.

"Can I say he fired me because I was gay?" he asks. "You can draw your own conclusions, but for me it was a message."

'Now I just have to be honest'

In past on-camera storylines, WWE used gay content to rile fans. In 2002, wrestling characters "Billy and Chuck," also known as the "Flamboyant Duo," were "wed" during a match — to loud jeers and boos from the crowd.

Most recently, WWE released wrestler "Jordan Orlando," whose myspace.com web site admits he is bisexual. He was released surrounding rumors that he had an unauthorized male visitor backstage at wrestling events.

The WWE did not respond to requests for comment about the organization, Orlando, or Klucsarits' claims.

After his release from the WWE, Klucsarits says he continued working with therapists to deal with coming out.

By 2006, he was ready. In February, Klucsarits announced that his character "Chris Kanyon" was gay. Klucsarits didn't reveal whether the man behind the character was gay, because he says he wanted to cause a greater stir by doing so as a signed performer.

"I couldn't do any damage to the character, and this was a way to milk it out," he says. "The theory was to get publicity grown, get signed and make a real announcement by going on Howard Stern, or going on the Today Show or Oprah or wherever."

Klucsarits also says his national coming out could have helped more people.

"If I was young and there were openly gay people in every major sport, more regular types that were gay, maybe there'd be less discrimination," he says. "I hope that my experiences and the way the world accepts me inspires others to come out as well."

Klucsarits officially announced that the man who played "Kanyon" was gay in March, but the way he came out raised eyebrows in the industry. James Caldwell, a columnist at Pro Wrestling Torch, wrote that Klucsarits' "lack of clarity instantly hurt his cause in taking a supposed social stand."

"How do you change stereotypes without people knowing about you?" Klucsarits asks. "I have the fame. I'm already famous. I'm already in a video game, I have an action figure, and now I just have to be honest."

Determined to succeed

After coming out in character and in person, Klucsarits continues to struggle with bipolar disorder. Just last month, he says he again attempted suicide, this time preparing to jump from the top of a building before his roommate and brother saved his life.

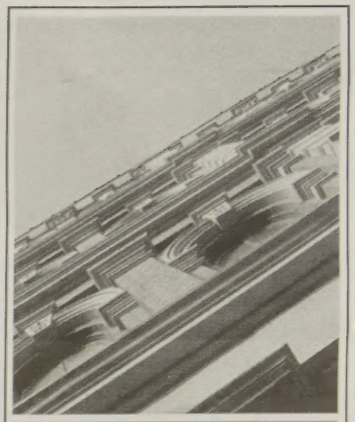
But after more therapy in Atlanta and a continuing regimen of "wonder drugs," Klucsarits says he's happier and more stable than ever. He says he's selling his Florida home and permanently moving back to Atlanta, where he receives counseling at Kaiser Permanente.

"I knew being in Midtown and meeting so many gay people would be good, and I know it's going to be a great journey in my personal and professional life," Klucsarits says. "My biggest regret is that I never listened and understood the words to the Aerosmith song 'Amazing'... 'life is a journey not a destination...' and the journey is going to be so cool, however long it is, and it's going to be great."

As for his professional career, Klucsarits says he was leaving July 19 to drop the opening puck in the Ice Hockey finals at Chicago's Gay Games. He also says he's in talks to shoot a reality series pilot, and he continually works to build buzz for a pending comeback.

But don't ask him about a back-up plan.

"I absolutely refuse to have a back up plan," he says. "There is no other option. I will set my mind to this, and I will succeed. I'll probably still be on meds, I'll probably still be in therapy, and I'll probably be further on my spiritual journey, but I'll be smarter, wiser and things are going to happen."



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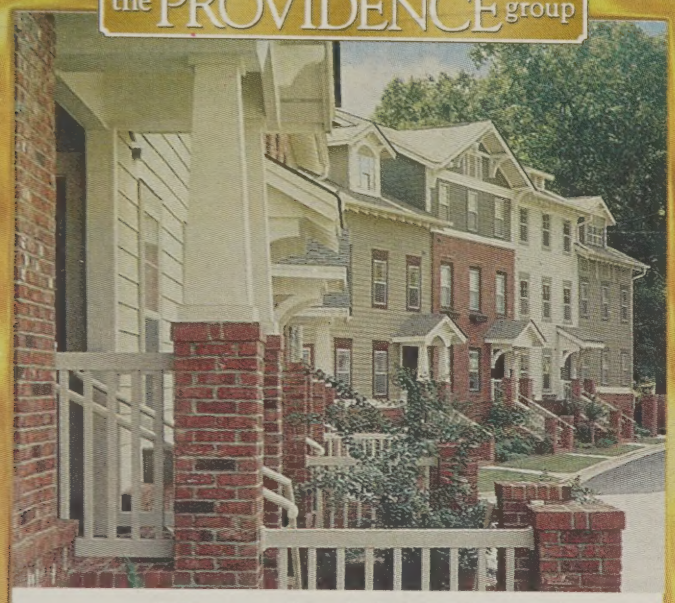

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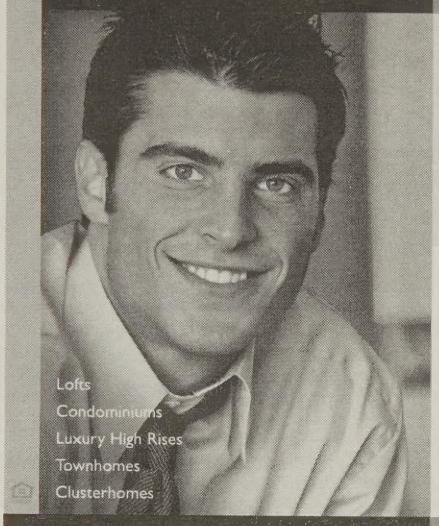

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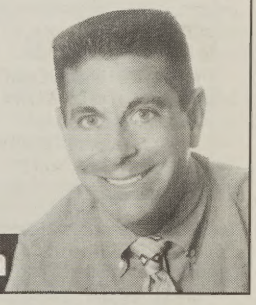

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Toasting the torchbearers

Lesbian pioneers share 'herstory' behind Olympics, Cracker Barrel fights

By RYAN LEE

AS ATLANTA CITY OFFICIALS AND residents bask in the 10-year afterglow of the Centennial Olympics this month, some locals are also reflecting on the gold-medal performance by gay and lesbian activists prior to the 1996 games.

The gay victory was no less thrilling — and surprising — than when an injured Kerri Strug vaulted the U.S. women's gymnastics team past historic powerhouses Russia and Romania to win the gold medal on American soil.

"No one wanted to get involved in something that was considered to be unwinnable," lesbian activist Pat Hussain recalls about early efforts to convince the almighty Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games to move Olympic venues and events out of Cobb County, where the county commission had recently passed a strident anti-gay resolution.

MORE INFO

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Through Sept. 7
Atlanta-Fulton Public Library, Central Library
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Subliminal Messages & Subversive Influences: Atlanta GLBTQ Poets & Griots Reveal Their Queer Roots
July 22, 2-4 p.m.
Central Library

'Wilde' film screening
July 25, 7 p.m.
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An Evening Bohemian Poet Edward Field
July 29, 7:30 p.m.
980 Ponce de Leon Ave.
404-885-7820

Atlanta Lesbian Herstory Panel
July 30, 2 p.m.
Central Library

Touching Up Our Roots: GLBTQ History
Aug. 12, 1-4 p.m.
Central Library

In February 1994, ACOG announced that Cobb County's Galleria Centre would host women's volleyball during the '96 Olympics. The decision sparked a six-month protest that included bringing traffic on Interstate 75 to a standstill, and questioning the sexual orientation of the Atlanta Olympic mascot, Izzy.

The protest was in response to the August 1993 Cobb County resolution declaring that "lifestyles advocated by the gay community should not be endorsed by government policy makers, because they are incompatible with the standards to which this community subscribes."

"Little did [ACOG] know how many people across the country and world would become involved in the protest once they found out about it," says Hussain, who co-chaired the Olympics Out of Cobb Coalition, along with Jon-Ivan Weaver, who is also gay. "If they left women's volleyball in Cobb County, the promise was to protest during the games — we would tie Atlanta into an Olympic knot."

After months of stubborn resistance — by ACOG to change venues, and by Cobb County commissioners to rescind their anti-gay resolution — ACOG President Billy Payne announced that the Coliseum at the University of Georgia in Athens would host women's volleyball in 1996.

Hussain discusses her role in the watershed victory during the July 30 "Atlanta Lesbian Herstory Panel" at the Central Library downtown. The panel also features Cheryl Summerville, a lesbian whose 1991 firing by Cracker Barrel initiated a 12-year national boycott of the restaurant chain. The panel is held in conjunction with several other "Out at the Library events at the Central Library, and as the library hosts the James C. Hormel Gay & Lesbian Center, a traveling exhibit produced by the San Francisco Public Library.

"It is not that long ago, but for many of the women and men in our community, they don't understand that just a decade ago things were much more difficult," says Sherry Siclair, development director for the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library. "It's time to honor our mothers who took the risks."

Pat Hussain (right) and **Jon-Ivan Weaver** helped lead the historic push to move 1996 Olympic events out of Cobb County due to the county's anti-gay policies.

WHEN THE OLYMPICS OUT OF COBB Coalition began pressuring ACOG to reverse its decision to place events in Cobb County, Hussain recalls that it marked gay activists first encounter with a characteristically resolute Shirley Franklin, who at the time was a senior policy adviser at ACOG.

"She was definitely a listening ear and felt we had the right to protest," Hussain says of Atlanta's current mayor. "But she was also clear that we weren't going to get what we wanted."

Franklin participated in every meeting with gay activists, and Hussain remembers that her primary message was that ACOG was a private entity that had already decided upon locations. Failing to make headway with ACOG, Hussain and others decided to protest when members of the International Olympic Committee were visiting Atlanta.

The efforts to embarrass local organizers in front of the IOC included disrupting a visit by IOC officials to the Marietta offices of ACOG by having gay protesters occupy every lane of the highway driving only 40 miles per hour.

A pair of protestors also infiltrated ACOG's private unveiling for Atlanta's Olympic cauldron, jumping onstage and unfurling an "Olympics Out of Cobb" banner. But Hussain says one breaking point for Payne may have been when gay protestors used his beloved Izzy mascot during a tongue-in-cheek demonstration outside the World of Coke.

"We made up our own Izzy costume for the protest and had signs asking 'Izzy gay?' 'Izzy Straight?' 'Izzy Safe in Cobb County?'" Hussain remembers. "We said, 'We're not trying to attack him; we just don't know what his sexual orientation is, and if he's gay, he could get in trouble if he goes to Cobb County."

Shortly after the demonstration, Hussain remembers the surfacing of a Ms. Izzy and little Izzies to quell any doubts.

ONE YEAR AFTER COBB COUNTY passed its infamous resolution, Hussain and Weaver got the phone call they long awaited, but only half- expected.

"Shirley called and said, 'Congratulations, you won. There'll be a 10 o'clock press conference, but we'd ask you not to say anything until then,'" recalls Hussain, who adds that the fight over the Olympics continues to offer lessons.

"It says something about resistance and outcome, and how you don't know what's going to happen," Hussain says.

Summerville, the former Cracker Barrel employee who now works as circulation manager for Southern Voice, agrees that it's important not to forget milestone victories in Atlanta like the Olympics and her fight with Cracker Barrel, which ended with the restaurant chain adding sexual orientation to its non-discrimination policy in 2003.

"I think younger people probably don't know anything about it at all, and don't realize how unprotected we still are," Summerville says. "We haven't come nearly as far as I think some people think we have."

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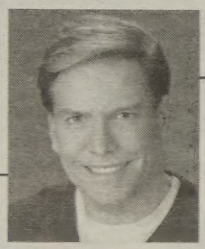

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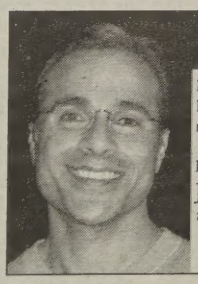

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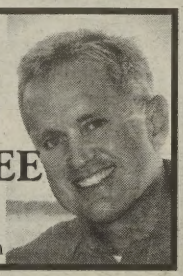

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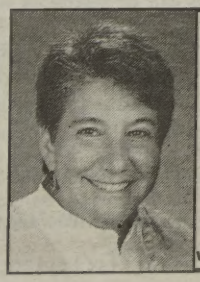

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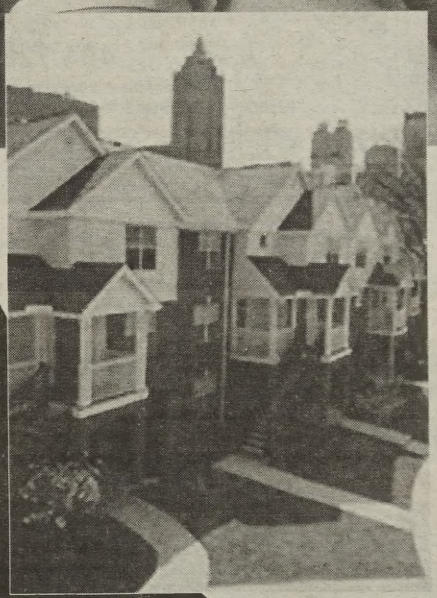

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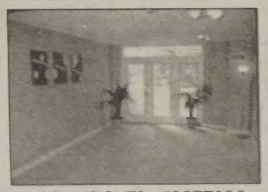

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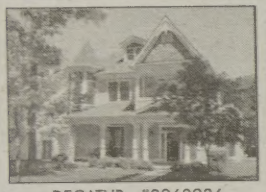

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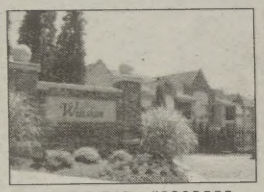

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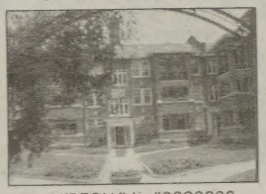

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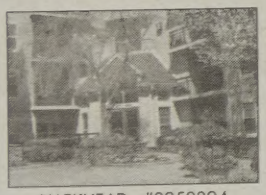

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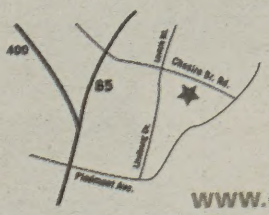

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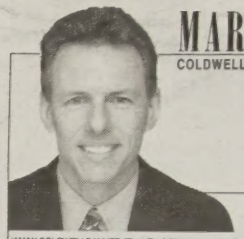

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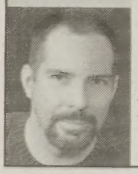

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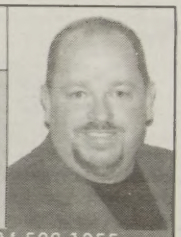

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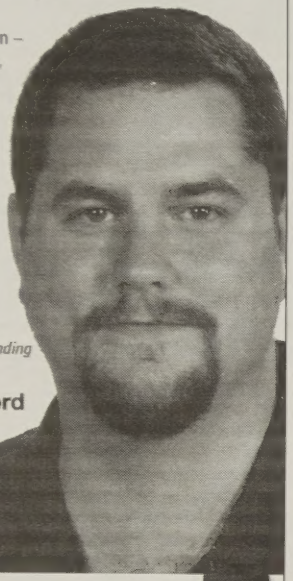

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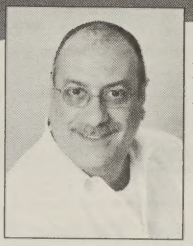

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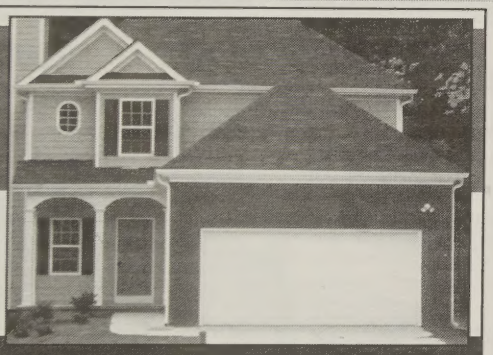

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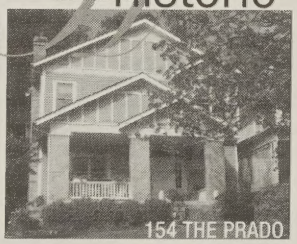

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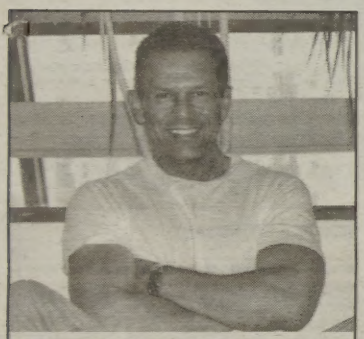

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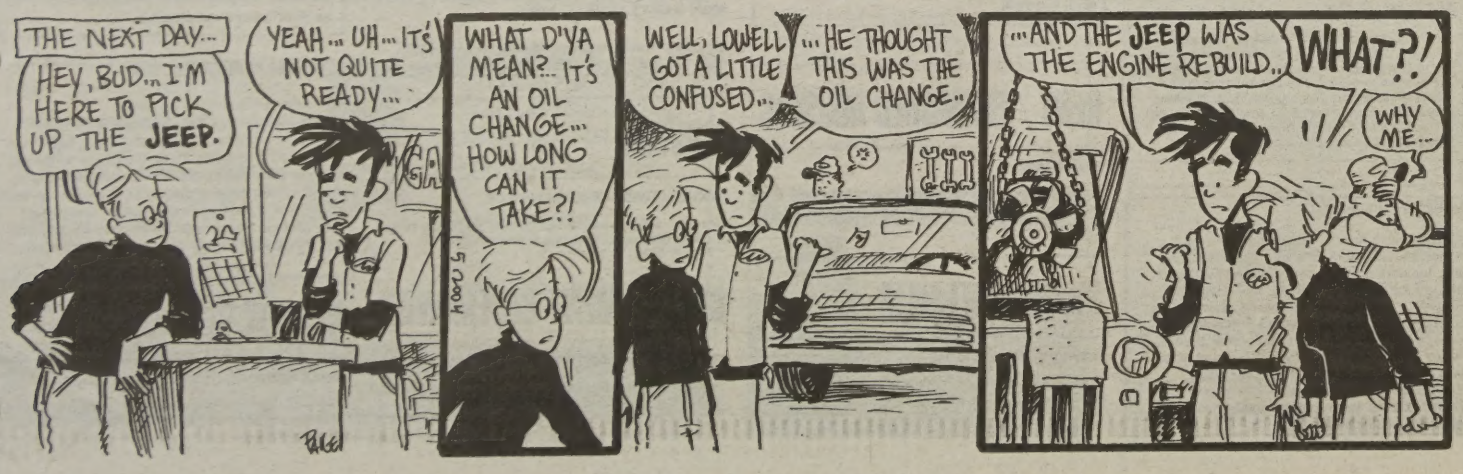
Jane's World


THE NEXT DAY...
HEY, BUD... I'M HERE TO PICK UP THE JEEP.
YEAH... UH... IT'S NOT QUITE READY...
WHAT D'YA MEAN?... IT'S AN OIL CHANGE... HOW LONG CAN IT TAKE?!
HOURS!
WELL, LOWELL GOT A LITTLE CONFUSED...
...HE THOUGHT THIS WAS THE OIL CHANGE.
...AND THE JEEP WAS THE ENGINE REBUILD...
WHAT?!
WHY ME...

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Contact Classifieds for details:
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TROY By Michael Derry
#147 "HOME TO ROOST"
HEY, RIGO, CAN I... UM... YOU GOT A SECOND?
FOR YOU? SURE. BUT I SHOULD TELL YOU, I GOT BACK TOGETHER WITH JORGE AND I SWORE TO HIM THAT I WILL NOT MESS IT UP THIS TIME!
RIGO, I... I DIDN'T COME HERE TO HOOK UP, IT'S... DAMN, THIS IS HARD! OK. SO LIKE, I JUST TESTED POSITIVE AND AFTER ALL THOSE TIMES WHERE WE WEREN'T, YOU KNOW, CAREFUL, I REALLY THOUGHT THAT, YOU KNOW, YOU SHOULD PROBABLY GET CHECKED OUT. THERE! I SAID IT!
BUT... BUT... BUT...! THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! YOU..! YOU'RE ONLY LIKE, WHAT? TWENTY?
JUST TURNED TWENTY-ONE LAST WEEK. HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ME, RIGHT?
HEY, SEXY! HOPE I'M NOT INTERRUPTING ANYTHING.
AAHH! JORGE! THERE YOU ARE! YOU... AH... HAVE YOU MET BILLY? YOU KNOW, I TOLD YOU ALL ABOUT HIM... WITH THE... YOU KNOW... AND THE...
HEY! HAPPY BIRTHDAY, BOY! HOW ABOUT SOME SHOTS, HUH? EVERYBODY WANTS SHOTS ON THEIR BIRTHDAY! DID I TELL YOU IT'S HIS BIRTHDAY? TWENTY ONE! CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT? HA! HAAAAA!!!! HOOOEEE! I TELL YA, I SURE AS HELL CAN'T!
GULP!
SO... YOU'RE THE LITTLE, TWINK WHO WAS FUCKING MY BOYFRIEND?
AND YOU'RE THE BOX BOY WHO DID THE LIVE SEX SHOW ON THE INTERNET WITH RIGO'S BEST FRIEND!
NOW THAT WE ALL KNOW EACH OTHER, ANOTHER ROUND! PARTY'S JUST GETTIN' STARTED, RIGHT? RIGHT? RIGHT????
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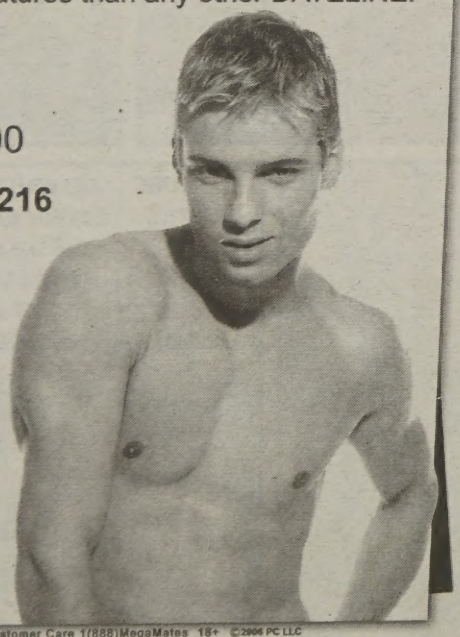

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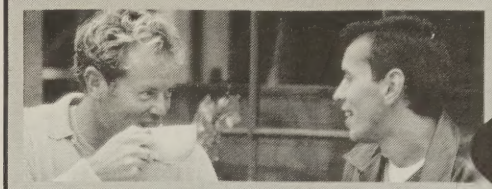

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Been Glanced ?

GRADY IDC CLINIC
Saw you at IDC clinic pharmacy on Feb. 6, 2006. You standing at door, shaved head, with grey toboggan in silver belt. Me: 6'3", wearing grey turtleneck, let's talk. Atlanta ☎916740

Men Seeking Men

HEY THERE
SWM, 27, red/hazel, 6'1", 168lbs, smoker, enjoys yard work. Seeking a WM, 27-48, smoker, to connect with and have some fun. Atlanta ☎937279

GET IN TOUCH
SBM, 29, 165lbs, attractive, swimmers build. Seeking a SB/WF, 18-30, for friendship, fun and maybe more. Greenbrier ☎945059

PROFESSIONAL MAN
WM, 56, responsible (can be wild at times), enjoys movies, travel, history, and good conversation. Seeking WM, 40-60. Roswell ☎817643 @ **peachboy**

LIKE BEING SHOWERED...
with attention? SBM, 40, N/S, total bottom, a little femme, very healthy HIV+, enjoys 70s rock. Seeking man, 43-60, silver hair and glass a+, top, race open, for LTR. Atlanta ☎694072

DOWN-TO-EARTH KIND OF GUY
SWM, 25, employed, enjoys beach, mountains, etc. Looking to meet SWM, 18-33, who is independent, honest and enjoys similar interest. Augusta ☎876663

KEEP IT REAL
SBM, 36, a "Student of life, and I guess a product of my experiences. Seeking SWM, SHM, 27-35, to be who they are, not who people want them to be. Atlanta ☎947457 @ **Morethanalover**

IS THIS YOU?
Male, 26, 178lbs, 6' 2", open-minded, slim build, likes hiking, swimming, movies, seeks open-minded man, 18-35, with similar interests, for possible LTR. Asheville ☎990890

A GREAT CATCH
Understanding SBM, 27, 5' 11", 180lbs, athletic build, top, but willing to try bottom. Seeks open-minded, sensual man, 21-45, for friendship, possible romance. Asheville ☎987115

SEEKING THE REAL THING
Compassionate, thoughtful GM, 25, relocating from NYC to Atlanta, enjoys politics, economics. Seeking like-minded guy, 18-40, for fun times. Manhattanville ☎940714 @ **examinedlife**

DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH
GWM, 43, smooth, athletic build, 5'8", brown/blue, enjoys beaches, cars, music and movies, monogamous LTR, moderate drinker, smoker, N/Drugs. Highway 5 ☎936252

BE MY TOP
Submissive, african-american bottom, 5'5", 145lbs, attractive, fit, health-conscious. Attracted to dominant, aggressive top guys. Age, race open. Let's talk. Atlanta ☎964136

ARE YOU OUT THERE
SBM, 26, wouldnt mind finding a guy who likes movies, talking on the phone, dinners, romantic nights in, music, sports. Seeking SM, 18-45, For friendship maybe more Belvedere ☎937728 @ **cre8iv104**

IS THIS YOU?
SBM, 26. Enjoys cooking. Seeks intelligent, sweet, BM, 21-40, must like fun, movies, mails. Willing to help at times. Macon ☎967163

WHY NOT CALL?
SBM, 46, 5' 6", enjoys sporting events, reading, seeks stable, down to earth man, 35-55, for friendship, possible romance. Johns Island ☎986995

SEEKING LTR
GWM, 51, seeking LTR with like minded GM, who knows the meaning of a relationship and willing to work through the inevitable rough spots. Enjoys baseball, bowling, reading, movies, theater. Rome ☎927593 @ **Stuff1122**

GOOD CATCH
GWM, 52, 5'10", 165lbs, brown/shaved, Fu Manchu moustache, HIV+ but healthy, sincere, affectionate, masculine, loves the outdoors, landscaping, gardening. Hoping to meet a man, 38-53, with similar interests and qualities. Atlanta ☎374135

SOUTHERN GENTLEMAN
Educated, good-looking, masculine GBM, 54, 6', 170lbs, salt-n-pepper wavy hair, HIV+, affectionate, healthy, N/S, loves music, travel, and hiking. Seeking man, 48-59, N/S, for dating, LTR. Atlanta ☎930446

QUALITY GUY SEEKING...
I am an energetic, extroverted guy who loves wit, candor and fine things in life. I also enjoy outdoors, biking, hiking, music, conversation, books, travel, films, theater and more. Milledgeville ☎925399 @ **DanGayMan**

CONSERVATIVE MALE
Outgoing SBM, 23, 5' 11", 180lbs, athletic build. Enjoys sports, outdoors, movies, plays, reading, seeks SWM, 19-60, for LTR. Loganville ☎959001

SERIOUS MEN ONLY
21, gay WM, works out, seeks laid-back, down to earth WM, 18-38, for fun, and LTR. Marietta ☎952378

SHARE THE LOVE
SWM, 45, Fun- loving, romantic, sexy and down-to-earth. Seeking SM, for fun, friendship and more Atlanta ☎935771 @ **dabarron6**

DOMINANT TOP
SWM, 45, 6', blond/blue, 175lbs, muscular build, HIV+. Looking for a SWM, 39-53, who is HIV+, stable, interested in a relationship/boyfriend and comfortable being a bottom. Atlanta ☎941123

UNIQUE NON-SCENE
Gentle GWM, Libra, 50s, 5'10", brown/brown, moustache, regular build, 180lbs, straight-acting/appearing, home/relationship oriented. ISO somewhat similar stable GM, 40+. Honest, integrity, spirituality are what matter. Take a chance. Tucker ☎943612

SO MUCH TO OFFER
Nice, honest, sincere SWM, 43, 5' 10", 168lbs, clean shaven, clean cut. Enjoys hanging out, coffeehouses, long walks. Seeks WM, 28-48, N/S. Atlanta ☎965356

Women Seeking Women

NO LET DOWNS
SBF, 25, 5' 5", average build, caramel complexion, full-figured, attractive, seeks BF, 26-38, for friendship, possible romance. Atlanta ☎110230

ANYBODY FOR ME?
SBF, 35, enjoys going out, having fun, seeks understanding woman, 25-35, for friendship, possible LTR. Atlanta ☎987307

COME PLAY WITH ME
SWF, 30, Extremely attractive creature, beautiful and intelligent. Seeking SF, 25-60, a very fun older, attractive femme. Decatur ☎929492 @ **WellWicked**

MOVING TOWARD PARADISE
SBF 5'5", 170lbs, energetic, athletic, outgoing, love to have fun, loving, understanding, and kind. Seeking SBF 30+, who's outgoing, likes to have fun. Looking for friendship, feel free to inquire. Warner Robins ☎991730

ISO REAL LOVE
SBF, 44, 5'6", 170lbs, healthy, Capricorn, N/S, enjoys movies, travel, seeks woman, 30-55, N/S, feminine, outgoing, compatible, possible romance. Centerville Gwinnett ☎981382

NO PLAYERS WANTED
SWF, 43, adventurous, spontaneous, loves the outdoors and participates in long distance trail endurance races. Seeking SM, 38-48, that appreciates life, to be my friend and partner. Smyrna ☎953794 @ **inthepresent**

HOPE IT'S YOU
Full-figured SBF, 38, 5'10", enjoys beaches, going out, seeks independent woman, 36-55, for friendship, possible romance. Atlanta ☎987241

TOYS" R" US KID
Femme, funny affectionate female, 35, loves mini golf, flowers, fun, womens football, snuggling, more. ISO cute stud with great sense of humor, to enjoys a little romance, lasting friendship. Buford ☎975504

LOOKING FOR BEAUTY FEMME
SBPF, 26, attractive, easygoing, down-to-earth, seeking SBF, 18-40, for stimulating conversation, hanging out, general fun. Atlanta ☎975436 @ **southernbeauty80**

WORTH YOUR CALL
GWF, 45, very feminine, 5'2", 140lbs, high-lighted wavy brown/hazel, olive complexion, pretty smile, friendly, outgoing, affectionate, sincere, likes fitness, travel, picnics, clubs. Seeking compatible feminine lady slim-medium build. Friendship/dating. Tucker ☎976656

WHY WAIT?
Dominant BF, 29, student, 5'4", 135lbs, seeks a beautiful, feminine, confident, mature lady, goal-oriented, ambitious, sincere, to share the special times in life. Belvedere ☎982719

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READY FOR ADVENTURE
GWF, 35, N/S, high-achieving professional, seeks GF, 30-39, attractive, intelligent, emotionally mature, for friendship and maybe more. Stone Mountain ☎953485 @ **lovetoplay**

SPONTANEOUS ROMANTIC
Attractive SGWF, 37, 5'7", butch, seeks feminine, adventurous WF, 33-45, likes traveling, for fun, and exciting evenings. Atlanta ☎984323

SEEKING COMPANION
SBF, 35, 5'8", enjoys movies, reading, sports and more. Seeking a SB/WF, 25-45, who enjoys having fun. Birmingham ☎945706

LOVE NEVER FAILS
Feminine lady, 26, N/S, seeks feminine lady, 25-30, attractive, confident, with good head on shoulders. Birmingham ☎959339

LOVE NEVER FAILS
SBF, 44, N/S, seeks BF, 30-51, N/S, willing to step out of the ordinary to the impossible, who loves travel and walks in the park. Knoxville ☎920537

ENJOYS THE SIMPLE THINGS
GWF, 46, 5'9", brown eyes, loves to spend time outdoors, looking for a GWF, 40-50, non-smoker, non-drinker, no drugs, no drama, for possible LTR. Muscadine ☎865446

TIRED OF THE RAT RACE?
Mellow, low maintenance GWF, 55, attractive femme, Leo, N/S, loves harmony, looking for her butch in shining armor. Seeking WF, 35-65. Augusta ☎897913

ANY INTEREST?
SBF, 47, 5'1", medium build, very attractive. Seeking a single female, 25-55, race open, for friendship and fun times. Smyrna ☎939575

SEEKING FRIENDSHIP & LOVE
SBF, 58, quiet, fun-loving, loyal. Enjoys music, dancing, outdoors, and adventure. Seeks sincere, honest, affectionate stud, 48-62, for friendship, companionship. Ready to give and receive love. Atlanta ☎956410

AGRESSIVE? YES
Controlling? Never. Kind? Yes. Crass? Never. GBF, 48, 5'8", average build, single mother, N/S, loves art. Seeking spontaneous, self-confident woman, 35-55, under 5'8", N/S, with sense of humor. Atlanta ☎927361

TRY YOUR LUCK!
SBF, 43, 5'4", I enjoy walking, cycling, parks, movies, cooking, etc. Would like to meet a single female, 30-50, with similar interest. Columbus ☎940191

WHY NOT CALL
SBCF, 42, 5'3", H/W proportionate, enjoys writing, picnics, good talks, romance. Seeking sweet, honest Christina lady with God in her heart, to share life and all it's little pleasures. Atlanta ☎948671

GIVE ME A CALL
Femme, 44, single parent, looking for aggressive female, to spend quality time, and get to know, 37-48, ISO committed relationship. Washington ☎956299

HOPE TO FIND YOU
GBF, 45, seeks GF, 35-45, professional, spiritual, feminine and active to share friendship. No smokers, bi's drugs or. alcohol please. Atlanta ☎935407

TALK TO ME
SBF, 58, Sagittarius, loves sports, music, life, seeks BF, 45-65, to share same interests with. Norcross ☎952380

WARM AND WONDERFUL
SBF, 48, enjoys reading, park walks, movies, plays, good times laughter. Looking to meet honest, affectionate sincere lady to share the special times. Decatur ☎975969

HI THERE
SF, 45, Aries, employed, likes sports, playing basketball, weightlifting, long walks, cycling, more. Seeking secure, fit, active, confident lady drama-free and down-to-earth, who knows what she wants in life/love. Athens ☎978075

COSMOPOLITAN SPIRIT
SBF, 58, knowledgeable, insightful, loyal, filled with passion, life, elegance and grace, enjoys classical music, jazz, theater, movies, visual art, architecture. Seeking compatible, open-minded lady to share/explore life with. East Lake Branch ☎765281

COME AWAY WITH ME!
Attractive GWF, 48, longs to whisk young, feminine, attractive, commitment-minded, non-smoking GWF away. Come share sunsets on the beach, autumn nights cuddling by the fire. @ lyden. Marietta ☎781031

LOOKING FOR NEW FRIENDS
SBF, 41, Virgo, N/S, music movie and tv hound, very laid-back seeks woman, 35-50, for friendship and dating. Atlanta ☎901318

GWF IN DALLAS, GA
SWF, 40ish, 5'3", 130lbs, blonde/green, feminine lesbian. Enjoy reading, pool, lite-drinking. ISO feminine, softbutch,34-50, N/S preferred. I'm honest, passionate, care-free, just out of LTR. Looking for someone to work-out/run with. Dallas ☎964381

Just Friends

SEEKING FRIENDS
SBM, 20, 5'11", brown skin, no golds, no tattoos, seeks BM, 18-25, for friendship, to hang out, and talk. Atlanta ☎960183

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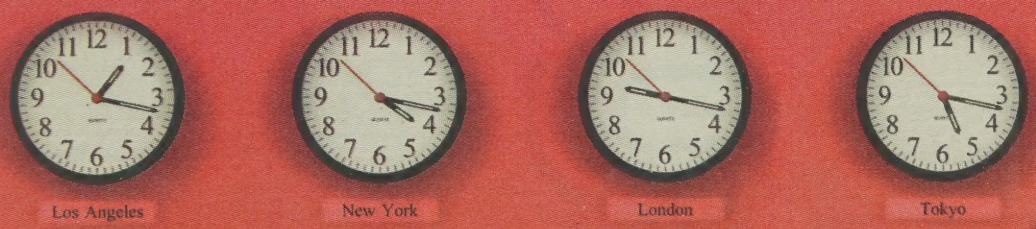

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